

SYMBOLIC AND MATERIAL ASPECTS OF INSTITUTIONS IN
POLITICAL PROCESS: analysis of two North Indian Villages

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A B S T R A C T

This thesis is an illustration of the use of the processual method in social anthropology.

In the first chapter a model is outlined. It deals with the problem of how to treat political anthropology. The main argument is that one has to look at the material basis and the ideology of the groups under investigation and see how these two spheres interact in the process of competition for political goals.

They interact by being brought into the struggle by the contestants, and this is done through social relations, institutions. The institutions have both a material and ideological aspect and they act as resources for the groups that can use these aspects. Or rather, the groups activate and organize these material and ideological resources through social relations of different kinds.

In the second chapter the model is put in a definite social context, that of northern India.

The concepts of the first chapter are filled with ethnographic and conceptual data, and this is done by using a historic perspective, since the social relations and the resources mentioned above constantly change, some are emerging while others are vanishing.

In the third chapter the scale is narrowed down to the micro-sociological level. Elections to the statutory panchayats in two villages in the area described in the second chapter are analysed. The conceptual and ethnographic framework from chapter two is taken as given and operative in this process, it constitutes the resources for the different groups. The fourth chapter consists of a discussion of the other three chapters.

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CHAPTER ONE

This first chapter will be concerned with the construction of the analytical model that will be applied to the ethnographic material and to the case studies.

The model starts from the assumption that the actor finds himself in a certain situation and that he manipulates his resources and tries to overcome the constraints that prevent him from attaining a specific goal. Thus Turner writes:

"...when we analyze the structure of a social field we must regard as crucial properties of that field not only spatial relations and the framework of persisting relationships, which anthropologists call 'structural', but also the 'directed entities' at any given time operative in that field, the purposive activities of individuals and groups, in pursuit of their contemporary and long-term interests and aims."

(Turner 1968a:138).

The actor is an individual but he attains his goals by taking part as a member of a group. This group finds itself in competition with other groups for the (socially defined) scarce resources. The fact that the individual has the help of the group does not only mean that he enhances his chances of ultimately being able to control some of the scarce resources.

It means also that he surrenders his autonomy to a certain degree and that this imposes loyalties on him that may conflict with his immediate interests; and these loyalties may even keep him in the group after it has lost its "raison d'etre" to him.

In trying to attain his goal the actor uses, as has already been indicated, the different resources at his disposal.

These resources are activated through social relations i.e., institutions. "Institution" has been defined in the following way: "...institutions or patterns of institutionalization can be defined...as regulative principles which organize most of the activities of individuals in a society into definite organizational patterns from the point of view of some of the perennial, basic problems of any society or ordered social life."

(Eisenstadt 1968:410). Another definition is given by Nadel:

"By institution...we shall mean a standardized mode of social behaviour or, since social behaviour means co-activity, a standardized mode of co-activity". (Nadel 1951:108). And

Winch talks about social relations and ideas about reality as being two sides of the same coin. (Winch 1970:23). These definitions of "institution" lead to the conclusion that

"institution" does not only mean positions in the social hierarchy, "offices"; it also includes the ideological concepts that legitimize those "offices", i.e., it implies the notion of "values". Institutions can be ranged on a continuum. At the one extreme "value" is the most important regulative aspect of the institution, at the other "office" is the important aspect. The continuum is a device for representing the two aspects of "office" and "value" of an institution. And all institutions have these two aspects. In a situation where there is a high degree of consensus about norms the "value" aspect will be the main regulator of behaviour, while in a society where different ideologies compete, that is to say, a society which is characterized by change or potential change, the "offices" in the form of the material sanctions that the "offices" can muster will be the ultimate means of social control.

As was indicated above the actor draws his strength from the institutions he controls. But the institutions do not only constitute resources, they also set the limit to what is possible in a certain situation. An actor can in theory take an infinite number of alternative actions. In reality,

however, his alternatives are effectively limited by his own ability to find these alternatives and by the lack of institutions that would have made it possible for him to realize the alternatives that do exist. But there are also limitations with regard to the institutions that actually do exist. They cannot be used in an infinite number of ways even if the actor were in the unlikely situation that would be able to think of an infinite number of ways to use them. Every institution sets its own limit (at a certain point of time) to what is possible to accomplish by using it. In the final analysis, then, the actor is both restricted by and draws his strength from institutions.

Having thus discussed institutions the next thing will be to distinguish between the local level and the wider social system. To start with, it is assumed that the different units in a social system, or rather the different institutions, do not form discrete entities, but are on the contrary in constant interaction with other institutions and derive to a large extent their ability to function from this interaction. The local level can be territorially defined and bounded, but in a functional sense this cannot be done. There are always forces impinging from the outside,

and it is always affected by decisions and actions taken elsewhere. At the same time the institutions in the village affect the institutions of other territorial units be they villages or the government. These different levels in the social structure will be called "levels of integration" (c.f. Steward 1955).

The ideal is, of course, to study the interrelationship between the different levels of integration, but sometimes it may be necessary to restrict oneself to the local level. As Bailey puts it: "It might then be argued that although we cannot present an adequate picture of political life in Baderi (the village Bailey studied) if we exclude all relationships which go beyond the village boundaries, we can still limit our analysis to Baderi and treat the external relationships as intruding into the system which we are describing. That is to say, we begin to consider them only at the point at which they cross the village boundary: we study their effects in the village but not the systems in which they originate." (Bailey 1960:268) This is not satisfactory in a model that aims at investigating all the different relationships at different levels. (1)

And Bailey is also aware of this, something that can be seen from one of his most recent works. (Bailey 1969). However, in this thesis the analysis will be mainly restricted to the local level, due to the kind of material available, but it should be stressed again that the ideal analysis includes the forces that impinge on the local level and which are impinged on by the local level.

In addition to the levels of integration there are also "analytical levels". These may or may not coincide with the levels of integration. The "analytical levels" are those that are seen to operate in the form of groups in a certain situation when a specific action is being taken. They pertain to the actual process. In this sense groups which are structurally at the local level, but where one enjoys more power and perhaps status than the other, can be said to be on different "analytical levels" in a process of conflict. In the same way a group at the local level may be struggling with a group from the wider system, for instance a Department of the local government. In this case the levels of integration and the "analytical levels" would coincide.

In a situation when a dominant group is faced with opposition from other groups that have formerly been inferior to it, it may react by stressing the "traditional" roles, i.e. by paying special attention to the "front stage" performance in Goffman's terms (Goffman 1959). In every society there are roles which are institutionalized and the different incumbents of different roles have certain expectations on each other. These expectations are necessary for the functioning of the society and are brought about by the process of institutionalization.

In times of conflict and stress it can be expected that roles are played with greater formality in order to support the social order which is threatened with disintegration. This can be understood from the fact that, especially in the local-level setting, the force of "tradition" is very important. With regard to the concept of "tradition" it should be noted that it has nothing static about it, and in that sense it is not the opposite of "modern". In general terms it could be said that in order to talk about something being "modern" and "traditional" there has either to be a major shift, in the economic basis of a civilization with a concomitant change in relationships between people, or institutions, brought

about by developments within the civilization itself, as when the West-European farming society turned industrial, or there has to be a major change effected from outside. The institutions that then remain, at least for some time, are "traditional", which does not mean that they have always been what they seem to be, but that they in a sense represent an end-product of an epoch in the history of that society.

But they have still, in the new setting, a force of their own and are able to compel people's thinking and acting. This is what is meant below by saying that they have both a symbolic and a material aspect. When people solve disputes or wield power by resorting to "traditional" methods they use precisely this force that is inherent in institutions that have been accepted for a long time and in that process have come to be regarded as expressing certain relationships. (2)

The two main analytical variables that are going to be used are material resources and symbolism, which have already been introduced in the discussion about institutions under the names of "office" and "value".

The material variable is made up of "economic process", which is the same as the relations between the society and scarce

resources (socially defined), i.e., ecology, and "economic relations", which denotes the relations between different categories of people in the society, based ultimately on differential access to these scarce resources. (Cohen 1969:217).

This is of course very close to Steward's model for comparing different societies by using the method of "cultural ecology" (Steward 1955). This economically based variable manifests itself in the offices that regulate relationships between people. It is the power aspect, resting ultimately on the ability to inflict loss on opponents by the use of material sanctions.

The economic process in itself does not say anything definite about the social structure which is thus being formed in constant interaction with the environment. It merely sets the limits to the actual visible and possible relations between the people on the ground. Thus, for instance, if we are dealing with an industrial society, the economic process (relations between minerals or other raw material and man) does not in any way tell us how this society is run. It may be highly stratified into sharply defined classes, it may be relatively egalitarian, it may have an enormous bureaucracy or it may have a small one. Its political life may be dominated

by one single party and be highly authoritarian or it may have a multi-party system and consequently have a greater latitude of tolerance. Likewise, in an agricultural society, relations may be gighly unequal as in India or they may be fairly egalitarian as in the gumlao system described by Leach for parts of Kachin society; and there, furthermore, relations were changing between the ideal system of gumlao (egalitarian) and the hierarchical gumsa. (Leach 1967)

Agricultural societies are all concerned with cultivation, but there are great differences between them. There are those where an agricultural surplus may give rise to strong lineages as suggested by Freedman. (Freedman 1958) In some there are big landlords who can interfere at will in the lives of their subject tenants, made possible by the fact that land is scarce which inhibits the movement of cultivators away from the influence of the landowner. Colson has described how, among the Tonga, a village headman's authority is greatly circumscribed by the fact that people can leave the village and clear new land which is abundant, if they become dissatisfied with the headman. (Colson 1958)

All these examples refer to the cultivation of land, but to get at the material variable as such one has to qualify the

common denominator in terms of the relative scarcity or abundance of land and how it is used in different societies.

But, as has been argued above, this does not mean that the social structure in any way can be predicted from this qualification. The only thing that can be said is that there are degrees of probability or limits to what sort of social structure there can be on the land.

Thus, the economic relations cannot be predicted from a knowledge of the economic process alone. In the same way one cannot predict what institutions exist in a society from a knowledge of economic process and economic relations.⁽³⁾

But both the economic relations and the institutions pertaining to a certain society are dependent upon the economic process and a change in the latter will probably effect a change in the former two. And thus the material variable has an ecological aspect to it. In a way this is analogous to the morphological continuum that Frankenberg has suggested for Britain by postulating a progression from the rural extreme to the highly complex urban areas. Frankenberg is very careful, however, to disclaim any responsibility for having shown that these stages have to follow each other for a specific community. But he shows how specific relations to defined resources

exist together with certain patterns of relations between people (Frankenberg 1966).

The variable pertaining to symbolism and ideology deals with the way the people in a society view the world. All their activities take part within this mental framework.

In this thesis Weltanschauung will be applied to the individual.

It is a complete biography, and it changes through the experiences that the individual continues to have. This means that no two individuals will have exactly the same Weltanschauung.

And this means that change is possible. Some people will be more ready than others to take advantage of new opportunities due to their different Weltanschauungen. "Ideology"

will stand for that system of beliefs and values, expressed through symbols that holds a society together through consensus.

But "ideology" will also refer to the different group-based beliefs and norms, i.e., at the level of "sub-cultures"

(Cf. Steward 1955:47,55). The "ideology" of the society then becomes a sort of "super-ideology" as long as the "ideologies" of the constituent groups are not so radically different that there is a complete break-down in the society's "super-ideology". i.e., for the "ideologies" to be able to exist within the same "super-ideology" the bearers of the different

"ideologies" must know of each other (this is manifested quite often by the way an "ideology" expresses itself as the negation of another "ideology").

The Weltanschauung and the ideologies manifest themselves through "symbols". The common thing about "symbols" is the fact that they, in Cohen's words: "objectify social relationships" (Cohen 1969:220. Obviously, a "symbol" can never be referred to on its own. It always exists within a Weltanschauung and at a less inclusive level within an ideology, which gives meaning to the symbol and integrate the symbols into a coherent pattern. A symbol may be haphazardly chosen or arbitrarily created and as a thing it has no force of its own. It is only when it is put into the context of ideology of a certain group of people or society it is given a reality and a property of its own. It has always to be understood together with a group of people who are the bearers of the symbol at a certain time within a certain ideology. That is why Cohen argues that there can never be a science of symbols. Symbols can be arranged on a continuum from the mere sign to symbols with the greatest potency and often a multitude of meanings and which are thereby able to compel action. Symbols may be things or concepts,

reinterpretations of old groups or categories such as is happening in Africa when, as Cohen argues, (Cohen 1969:230-231) tribes are defining themselves not in an attempt to escape the realities of modern life, but precisely in order to be more efficient in political life. In the same way the caste associations in India have clear political functions and the scheduled castes have to acknowledge inferiority in order to get benefits from the state. In this way the state is perpetuating caste, which its ideology is expressly against. With regard to India it could be interesting to note how the concept of "dharma" in the Hindu religion has been used in promoting change. In dharma, which is the same as inherent duty, your position in life is decided, and your behaviour in this life will affect your future life. Dharma gives a purpose to everyone and it is essential that every individual should conform to the social rules that are laid down for his caste. Taken in this sense dharma is a conservative force, it explains and exhorts and thus it legitimizes your position in society and life. Your existence is integrated with the social process and in a wider context being is understood. But dharma has also been used for purposes of change and this seems to have been so partly because dharma can change during

a person's lifetime and from age to age and this leaves some room for manoeuvre and manipulation, since someone has to decide that the dharma of yesterday is not the dharma of today. And so this very fundamental concept of Hindu philosophy can be used to channel change which otherwise might have been dangerous to the system. (Bondurant 1963)

The same can be said about Gandhi's redefinition of the outcasts as Harijans, children of God. The symbol of Gandhi, who derived his influence from working within the Hindu conceptual system, made this redefinition of a despised category acceptable and gave it a certain potency.

Thus symbols pertain to a certain cognitive and emotional universe and are to be seen in this context. They are used by people in political action or competition purposely to cheat, as when a group who no longer has any attachment to the symbol use it to their own advantage against people for whom the symbol has a great potency, or it may be used in legitimation and institutionalization, that is it expresses the ethics and aesthetics of a particular society and thereby its ideology in certain spheres. The symbols are not mere reflections of power constellations based on given resources.

They have a force of their own which is of course derived from the ideology, which they legitimize. To understand why this is so, it is necessary to probe into the question what it is that gives symbols this power. This is obviously an important problem since no social system can be based on force alone, although, as Radcliffe-Brown saw, it may ultimately be based on differential access to force (Radcliffe-Brown 1940:xiv). All societies have to have some rationalization for there being inequality in the social hierarchy and this rationalization must be strong enough to give a majority of the people a sense of belonging and ultimately, in some societies, making exploited classes stay content with their lot, or at least preventing them from open rebellion. This is so obvious that it need hardly be stated. The key-concept is of course internalization. As Turner points out: "It is not necessary for a symbol to be verbally explained to be comprehended; its significance is often understood at preconscious, or even unconscious, levels" (Turner 1968b:8). Through socialization into society people learn norms and values. This is repeated in everyday life making the world appear as the only reality. This reality, which equals the Weltanschauung of the individual and the

ideology of the group into which he was born does not act solely on the individual's cognitive mind. It also forms his unconscious mind and thus the content of what is internalized takes on an emotional character.

When an ideology is internalized the problem is to maintain it and this is done through ritual and through symbols. Ritual here being used in Leach's terms: "Ritual...serves to express the individual's status as a social person in the structural system in which he finds himself for the time being" (Leach 1967:10,11). Ritual, to Leach, is not certain actions, but aspects of actions, whatever may be the meaning of the action as such (Leach 1967:13). This definition of ritual will be used in this thesis, i.e., as a symbolic aspect of actions. Symbols that are the constituent elements of Weltanschauungen and ideologies have, as Turner points out, an emotional and a cognitive pole: "What is interesting is that there appear to be two distinct and opposed poles of reference. At one pole there is a cluster of referents to organic and physiological phenomena; at the other, a cluster of referents to the norms and values of society... It is as though the whole strength of the emotion aroused by the ideas culturally associated with the organic referents of such symbols is

borrowed, as it were, by the normative and ethical referents."

(Turner 1968:18) This means that the symbols derive their force from an appeal to the conscious mind while at the same time working at the unconscious level and drawing their strength from the internalized values and norms which they express.

Thus, symbols standing for something that an individual may reject may nevertheless have an emotional appeal and autonomy.

It is this largely unconscious property of the symbols that give them their power to compel (Cf. Cohen 1969:227). And this brings up an important point. In the same way as actors can only use material resources in a limited number of ways, internalization sets the limits to what can be done with symbols. Thus they also constitute both resources and constraints.

And it should furthermore be stressed that institutions, as well as having a material aspect, also have a symbolic aspect.

In this way, institutions can be manipulated by different groups through the use of symbols. Often control of one institution is brought about by using the symbolic power of another institution and it would seem to be the case (at least from the material that follows) that the more traditional institutions have this very compelling power in the hands of the groups that are able to use them.

And this introduces the concept of "organization". It means simply the constellation of material and symbolic resources that a group employs at a specific moment in a situation of competition. That is, one has to delimit the institutions by looking at the process. If one looks at Hindu society as an institution in competition with other institutions, for instance Islam, the values and the offices in the society make up the symbolic and material aspects of the institution. And in this case, all the constituent institutions in Hindu society make up the "organization". In the same way, a group within Hindu society may use values and offices against another group at a certain moment. Then these institutions form together the "organization", and the materially most powerful institutions in that constellation will furnish the material aspect while the values that appeal most forcefully to the opposing group will make up the symbolic aspect. Thus, the material aspect of the latter and the symbolic aspect of the former will be submerged by the whole, by the "organization". But this "organization" is not simply the sum of the institutions of which it is made up. It is a qualitative unit which has to be understood on its own. And it is more appropriate to call it "organization" instead of talking about institution, since

it is transient and changes during the process in response to actions taken by the other group. In this way it is possible to adapt the institutions and their two aspects to the process under study and see their interconnection of institutions as expressing these aspects.

The analytical model presented in this chapter started with the individual actor and it has been argued that he has a *Weltanschauung* of his own, an integral part of which can be termed his ideology. The ideology becomes operative at two levels, that of the society as a whole and that of different sub-groups within the society. This means that the actor achieves his goals in a group context. The group acts as a resource but at the same time it imposes certain restrictions upon him and it may make him divide his loyalties.

In the society there are other institutions as well and they can be analytically divided into categories which shade into each other: values, where the ideological concept is the main organizer of the social relations associated with the institution, and offices, where the ultimate means of control is material sanctions. All institutions have these two aspects, but one or the other may be more salient.

The institutions operate at different levels of integration at the same time as they bind these levels together. These levels of integration should be distinguished from the analytical levels which are, as the name suggests, analytical devices for investigating the political process. These levels deal with the relative importance of different groups in competition regardless of which level(s) of integration they belong to.

The two aspects of office and value that institutions have are ultimately derived from ecology and economic relations and ideology and symbolism respectively. For values to work it is obvious that the ideology of the society has to be strong enough to off-set the consequences that the group-based ideologies in the society might have on the cohesion of the whole society.

Tradition has an important role to play in this context.

Traditional institutions operate without being questioned in a situation where the society's ideology is strong and the symbols well integrated into a coherent pattern embracing most groups. In a situation of change, however, traditional institutions may be important for certain groups while others try to make use of a new ideology with its institutions.

Here the office aspect of the traditional institutions will be more accentuated than they were before. And the more rival ideologies intrude and furnish new symbols and symbolic patterns to potentially dissident groups as well as providing them with new offices the more will the material aspect of the old institution stand out, even if the traditional groups use the value aspect, too. But that aspect will become increasingly more difficult to use.

In a processual study this interplay between traditional institutions and modern institutions can be analysed by help of the concept of organization. It means that all institutions activated at a certain moment are seen as constituting one single entity with the two aspects of material resources and symbolism. Since it is situationally defined it is an organization, not an institution.

It should be added, although it is rather obvious, that in order to elucidate the institutions that are operative at a certain moment in a culture, one has to take history into account. One has to understand how they have evolved over time, changed radically or gradually and thereby arrive at an understanding of the processes that take place on the ground and the principles that the actors are restricted to and the

resources they can use, and why they can use them. This is especially important in dealing with the symbolic aspect.

N O T E S

1 In a situation where one can distinguish between "power" and "influence" (Cf. Swartz, Turner, Tuden 1966:17-23) it would be important to analyse the system impinging on the village. The people at the local level might react back on the institution that is impinging (this would be a case with which Bailey does not deal, namely the fact that pressure is not always put on in a downward direction but can also go from the local level and upwards). Suppose then that this institution is under the influence of some other institution somewhere else and that it can impinge because it has got power and the other institution therefore uses it. In this case it would be insufficient (with regard to the feed-back results) to know only about the local level. One would also have to know about the relations between the other institutions and this means analysing at least the one that stands in direct contact with the village.

2 In the thesis the time is post-Independence and that means that to a certain extent institutions created under the British must be treated as traditional by virtue of the fact that they

are legitimized and are working units in the social fabric. These British-made institutions in turn replaced or worked together with (were influenced by and influenced) other institutions that already existed. This should make it clear that "tradition" and "traditional" are only applied because the analysis has to start somewhere and treat some things as given.

- 3 It is obviously true that in the same way as economic process sets limits to what economic relations there can be in a society, the economic relations set limits to the institutions. Here a distinction must be made between different forms of institutions. Economic relations in themselves are institutionalized and they form the most important institutions in the social sphere. But there are other institutions which are relatively unconnected to the major economic relations and these can change more easily. But, of course, in the final analysis they are also dependent upon economic process - economic relations.

CHAPTER TWO

This chapter will be concerned with outlining some of the concepts used in the first chapter with reference to Northern India.

The institutions of the society will be looked at from a historical perspective and this means that the concept of "tradition" and how it changes will be explained. To do this, however, it will be necessary first to treat the Hindu philosophy as an institution that has changed over time. This will be done in a very brief way; it has to be dealt with, since society is a process (Turner 1966:241) where there always are elements left from what has been. It can be argued that Hinduism once made up most of the Weltanschauung of the Indians and it is certainly still a potent ideology. Therefore, the more important concepts in Hinduism will be outlined, since they can be seen to make up part of the actor's conscious or sub-conscious awareness in modern India. Then the other institution of importance in the society will be described as they in the beginning, existed within the Hindu conceptual world, and then, as impressions from the outside world changed the Hindu Weltanschauung, came to be modified and changed. That changing

of these institutions is, it has to be remembered, an expression of a changing Weltanschauung. The thesis deals with the Indian society and thus it deals with how this society has been impinged upon by outside forces as well as changing from within.

Therefore, as was explained in the first chapter, these forces will be considered as they enter the Indian scene, and, in this chapter, since it deals with a macro process, the Indian response to these forces on their sources will have to be left out, and the model is to that degree, incomplete.

The exposition that follows on Hindu thought is drawn to a great extent from Pandhari-Nath Prabhu's book on the subject (Prabhu 1954).

"According to the Hindu, this life merely by itself alone would have no meaning; it has meaning only as a link - even if the last - in a chain of links of births in the past and in the future; it is a stage of transition from past births towards future birth or births, unless Moksha or 'final liberation' is obtained within the span of this life. And essentially, the birth of a human being is but an opportunity for him or her to free himself or herself from the bond of this chain of births by living a life of Dharma..." (17). Dharma is a concept that can mean more than one thing. "It has two aspects, one

naturalistic and the other normative. In its naturalistic meaning dharma means a necessary attribute... For example the dharma of water is to flow. In its normative meaning, which is the one used oftenest, dharma means 'the duty, the path to be followed'." (Karve 1968:91,92). Dharma can also "be used to connote religion, a category of theology..."

(Bondurant 1963:6). But here the concept will be taken to mean "duty". And therefore, it will be used in relation to the caste system. In this sense dharma is the rules that are laid down for each particular caste and to follow one's dharma means then to act in the way that is prescribed and deemed proper for the caste to which one belongs. But this static view is not all there is to dharma. "The question about what is right and wrong was answered in different ways depending upon the circumstances. Theoretically, right and wrong were not absolute. Practically right and wrong was decided according to general principles of d h a r m a as modified by principles of time, space and j ā t i (caste-group)" (Karve 1968:97). Thus dharma is also something that can accommodate change. There is "...the recognition of the integrating forces of d h a r m a and the insistence that the social order must progress, must change. Whereas the Westerner may tend to dichotomize and to think in

terms which lead him to suppose that factors and functions which promote stability may connote rigidity and even exclude flexibility, the Indian sees no difficulty whatsoever in speaking of integration, stability, and flexibility as aspects of the same function. Something can, indeed, be at once stable and flexible, in the image of tensile or ductile strength"

(Bondurant 1963:6). Moreover, dharma "as the norm of action, involves the observance of a number of precepts, all aimed at upholding the given order of things. But, at the same time, the dharma concept embraces the principle of flexibility.

Prescriptive regulations may be modified - indeed, it is quite proper to modify them in accordance with changing conditions and with changing times. The accommodative characteristics of the d h a r m a concept has allowed for change without overthrow of basic principles. We find here, then, everything which is necessary for the transvaluation of values. Within such a conceptual framework, revolution - even in the political sense - may be effected without the shock of violence. New values may be introduced through reinterpretations, and through the transformation and not the overthrow of earlier precepts"

(Bondurant 1963:10). To live according to one's dharma, then, assures that one stays a greater chance of being released from

the circle of birth and rebirth. The bodies that the soul takes residence in are perishable, the soul itself is eternal. If the soul can gain enough merit through dharma the circle is broken. And this is the meaning of karma. "The acts done in the former births never leave any creature. In determining the various effects of k a r m a, the Creator did see it. Man, being under the influence of k a r m a, must always consider how he can atone for his k a r m a and how he can extricate himself from an evil doom" (Prabhu 1954:22). "The law of k a r m a ...explains why sometimes persons who should evidently deserve happiness and success in life as judged by their deeds in this life nevertheless meet with failures and unhappiness, while sometimes the undeserving seem to succeed." (22). "...after death, a man's virtuous and vicious k a r m a s follow him and determine his fate in the next birth; one should, therefore, try to acquire d h a r m a which alone is one's true friend in the next world, and which determines his happiness and sorrow in the next birth. Nay, it determines even the particular kind of existence which he has to take; for the wicked may be born again as dogs, asses, worms and their like." (22). "Liberation from this cycle of births and deaths, and its accompanying happiness and sorrow can be achieved, when there

is no more k a r m a. And, to attain this end, all desire... must come to an end" (23). There are two ways of attaining liberation: one is to "vow not to taste, not to touch, and not to see". (24). Thus, all creation of desire is prevented. This way is, as Prabhu points out, somewhat extreme. The other way of achieving liberation from rebirth is "by following the way of one's own appointed duties" (24). That is to say, one should follow one's dharma.

This does not imply a wholly fatalistic view, however. Fatalism would anyway be ruled out, logically, by the fact that dharma can be redefined and thus is not something that is constant and secure. There is a concept 'fate', but nothing can be achieved by passively relying on it; man has to help it, as it were, by means of his actions. The Bhagvad-Gita, a treatise which "has secured the most honoured place in the heart of the masses as well as the classes of India, not only in matters of religious behaviour but also on social and moral issues" (42).

"The B h a g v a d - G ī t ā advocates a life of action and denounces that of inaction" (44). The carrying out of actions are hedged by two checks: "...k a r m a s are to be carried out without any idea of 'mine' and 'thine' and of selfishness"; and "in doing his k a r m a s, man is to follow his duty...

He should not be led by his senses; rather, he should carry out the duties which are his d h a r m a, and which he is born to do" (45). And then, if this is carried out the result, or reaction, is destiny. But it is important to remember, that this reaction can be counteracted. Thus, if "k a r m a is denoted by action, its reaction, which as reaction, is not under our control, but may in fact, control us to some extent, is d a i v a, or destiny; but there is yet the capability within us to counter-act d a i v a, which by choosing s u k a r m a or s v a d h a r m a (one's own dharma), which of course, naturally requires the exercise of self-control, i.e., control over our tendencies to act wrongly which are the result of our previous k a r m a s and their reactions" (49). This discussion has so far been about the k a r m a - m a r g a, the "way of action". But there are also, in the Gita, the Jnana-marga and the Bhakti-marga. They are alternative ways of attaining liberation from the cycle of rebirth. In Jnana-marga "knowledge is said to be the essential means towards the salvation of man not for the purpose of dispensing with the k a r m a s but for the purpose of giving the k a r m a s their due meaning and value" (51). "...the entire...k a r m a of such a man, whose attachments are dead, and whose mind is fixed on knowledge..., and who

performs actions in the spirit of a sacrifice... is completely destroyed" (52). Here one meets the idea that actions should be done "in a spirit of sacrifice, in a spirit of self-surrender" (52). Knowledge is important, it is the way the men of the old times tried to achieve liberation. The power of knowledge is very potent: "The fire of knowledge reduces all k a r m a s to ashes" (54). This "way of knowledge" is seen to be difficult for the ordinary man to go, so the Gita says that another way of attaining liberation for men is for them to "dedicate their actions to Sri Krishna, and holding Him as the highest goal, worship Him and meditate upon him with their minds fixed upon none but Him - of such men He becomes, without delay, the deliverer from the ocean of mortal world" (54). This is the Bhakti-marga and in connection with it is found, once "again, the doctrine of dedication of actions... A spirit of complete dedication and self-surrender to God is the main characteristic of a b h a k t a (devotee)". But here also, there is the possibility of knowledge: "By devoted love..to God, the devotee is able to attain the knowledge of God...and by knowing the true nature of God, the devotee enters into him"(55).

These three ways of attaining liberation are not alternative ways, but are to be seen as complementary "in as much as a man of good actions...who has attained knowledge...and is ever devoted to the One God alone...will find out his salvation without delay. Thus a real synthesis of k a r m a, j n ā n a and b h a k t i is made out here" (56). This complementary nature of the three concepts was conceived as "the life of full devotion...(being) hemmed in by a life of activity (k a r m a) and a life of reflection (j n ā n a)"(56).

The bhakti cults became very popular in India during different periods of time. One reason is the fact that they were open to everyone. There were no discriminations as far as castes were concerned and they were also open to women.

The above exposition has been directed at describing a few concepts in Hinduism that have important implications for inter-personal relations. It is not a ^sdescription of Hinduism as such. The concepts and the thoughts associated with them form a structure and a code that was supposed to guide men in their actions; it is a moral system, the ultimate sanctions being metaphysical, and therefore gaining a special kind of potency, since they cannot be rationally tried and discarded from experience. The concepts themselves are symbols and as

such internalized, thereby affecting men's actions both at the conscious and subconscious levels. Furthermore, this body of symbols deals with perennial questions and helps to explain man's place in the universe and the meaning of existence.

Here a word of caution should be inserted. The above ideals } ✓
with religion as theology (Leach 1968:1) and as such it is preoccupied with the life hereafter. It could also be argued that such a body of knowledge must of necessity be because of its very complexity, and the fact that most people in India are illiterate, limited to a few people (Brahmins) who are the authorities on how to explain the doctrines. (Sometimes the Brahmins themselves are illiterate and then there is no real authoritative connection between philosophy and religion as lived in everyday life). This fact makes it possible for those who control the written sources to interpret them in their favour and thus get divine sanction for their superiority. But it also means that religion among the people in general must be at a different level of sophistication, while, as far as the crucial concepts of the religion are concerned, the philosophy influences the thinking of the masses, but in other spheres their conception of the religious world might be quite different. This in itself is not important, since it is

the fact that as long as the ethics of the philosophical theory and the religion as lived by the people is essentially the same, there is one religion. This unity is kept up, again, by the use of certain wide concepts that have crucial importance as symbolizing the common world-view ideology.

It is important to understand that the doctrine of Hinduism is not static, it is "tradition" and as such it has always been changing. "...early Hinduism which was concerned with actions centred around the y a j n a (all karmas performed by men is Yajna, all knowledge is also yajna performed by man, life is a perpetual yajna "a perpetual dedication to God" (53)), was, in a sense, an activist religion in contrast with later Hinduism which was concerned with reflection and meditation, as in the Upanishads" (60). The concept of yajna was reinterpreted in terms of j n ā n a" (62). However, according to Prabhu, this was again carried to the extreme and provoked a reaction against it. In this way bhakti was introduced. "Yajna was interpreted as a discipline in self-surrender to the will of God; k a r m a was placed in opposition to a k a r m a, inactivity, and made acceptable in life as far as it was actuated in accordance with the d h a r m a of a man. J n ā n a was explained as instrumental in acquainting man with the knowledge

of the greatness and glory of God and Godliness... And
b h a k t i, towards which all these converge, with unswerving
faith...as its foundation, is the very pinnacle of the philo-
sophy of life expounded by the Gita"(65). The result of these
reinterpretations was that truest "and fullest living means
the complete surrender of everything...that is the real
y a j n a, the full y a j n a. And, all along, it is in this
line of thought that the Hindu did, and does even today look
upon life as a Y a j n a to be performed in terms of
b h a k t i, of course in spite of and in the midst of human
frailities" (65).

9 | The changes that have, according to the above description,
apparently taken place in Hindu thought over time, shows that
the concepts outlined are susceptible to reinterpretation
to meet the demands of new times. Unfortunately Prabhu lets
these changes take place without reference to the social reality
that must have changed with them. But the important thing is
the fact that it can be seen that Hindu concepts and elements
of the Hindu religion are not parts of a logically constructed
system that is the same for ever. On the other hand, it shows
that eternal truths are eternal only as long as they are not
reinterpreted. Traditional concepts are the same only in name

over time but their substance differs, and the people on the ground, knowing only the substance that is there at a particular moment, make the mistake, since they have no possibility of avoiding it, of letting the age-old authority of the concept (which is the same as institution if people behave accordingly) equal the content of that concept or institution.

Having thus established the frame around the institutions that are to be found in Hindu society it is convenient to move on by considering the history and function of the most salient institution, viz., caste.

The history of caste starts as far back as the records go. The Aryans in Vedic times divided the citizens into varnas. Blunt thinks that the varnas originally were connected with differences of colour between the conquering Aryans and the indigenous Dasyus. The fact that there were four and not two varnas would be due to the fact that the two groups intermarried and then there were four categories that became distinguishable. (Blunt 1931). Ghurye also entertains the idea that varna to begin with used to distinguish between races. (Ghurye 1957). Both use as proof the fact that the word "varna" means "colour". Karve, in her book, disputes the theory that varna is to be taken to mean colour. She argues that both the Brahmins and the

Kshatriya are Aryans and therefore it cannot be their skin colour that is being meant. And furthermore, she disputes also the fact that caste as such was created by the Aryans. Rather, she thinks, they came upon the caste system when they conquered the area. "It appears as if the Aryans came upon the phenomenon of caste and fitted it into a scheme known to them. The unity of v a r n a and j ā t i is a matter of fusion of two systems from two cultures" (Karve 1968:55). And she argues that this is proved by the fact that the "process of caste making has not stopped. New castes are coming into being even in the present stage" (61). And the "word varna, when used for describing human society also means class in a particular order" (51). It is, of course, impossible to establish satisfactorily which theory is the correct one. But one thing that perhaps speaks in favour of Karve is the fact that later the varnas have no connection at all with skin colour, but refer to certain broad social classes.

In Vedic times the varnas were three to start with. Two of them, the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas, have already been mentioned. The Brahmins were the highest, according to Rigveda; "The Brahmins are declared to be chief" (Ghurye 1957:44). The Kshatriya were the warriors and rulers, and the third varna

was called Vaisya, they were to start with the common people. Later a fourth varna, Shudras, was added. It became the lowest varna. In these early times there seem not to have been any rigid caste-like distinction between the varnas. It was possible to move from one varna to another, and inter-marriage was allowed. The varna closest approximating a caste was the Brahmins. The Brahmins and the Kshatriyas ruled together. "It is even suggested that the king rules by the authority delegated to him by the Brahmin" (Ghurye 1957:46). "The necessity of cooperation between the Brahmin and the Kshatriya for the complete prosperity of both is often reiterated" (47).

In the post-Vedic period the castes seem to have multiplied, thus, the "Brahmanic literature...mentions certain mixed castes... and also a groups of out-cast classes" (54). Nothing is known about their connections with the varnas. There is still inter-marriage between the different varnas and there are no rigid caste distinctions. "Jati" is used to denote divisions of "varna". The Brahmins are consolidating their power during this period, while the Shudras are being degraded. One of the reasons for the growing influence of the priest is the fact that sacrifice is growing in importance. The reason for this growing importance of sacrifice is not explained. "The Vaisya,

though traditionally classed with the first two 'varnas', is grouped on many occasions with the Sudras...the occupations ordained for these two classes are almost identical" (63).

Then Hinduism had to compete with new ideologies which had sprung from the Hindu social system and thought themselves.

"Both Jainism and Buddhism appear...to be movements started by Kshatriyas of exceptional ability preaching a new philosophy which were utilized by their immediate followers for asserting the social superiority of the Kshatriyas over the Brahmins" (69).

"Whatever might have been Buddha's own views and practice, it is indisputable that his early followers believed in the time-honoured restrictions of caste, and being most probably Kshatriyas themselves, utilized the opportunity, offered by Buddha's revolt, to establish Kshatriya pre-eminence among the four castes"(72).

The idea of pollution is mentioned for the first time in the Sutras, and now the occupations are to a great extent hereditary, and endogamy is being preferred, although exogamy is not prohibited. The Shudra is even more degraded, while the union between the Brahmin and the Kshatriya is lauded (although, it would seem, from the above, that the Kshatriya has now replaced the Brahmin as the caste on the top of that alliance), and the

Vaisya is even more approximated to the Shudra. As time goes on caste restrictions and prohibitions are being more and more acknowledged. A theory of pollution by contact is developed as a symbol for this.

In the Manu the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas are practically full-fledged occupational castes (it is interesting to note that agriculture is not open to the Brahmins). "The Vaisya and the Shudra groups are less clearly defined" (Blunt 1931:21). In addition there are "vratya" and "vrisala" castes. Nearly all of them were occupational castes. And Blunt argues that the caste system at this time was essentially the same as that existing today. "...the account in Manu's I n s t i t u t e s is in essentials an accurate account of the social system, as it was at that time. We find, side by side, v a r n a s or classes, tribal castes and occupational castes. That is precisely the state of affairs as it exists at the present day. Moreover, if we allow for an increase in the number of tribal castes sprung from the various invaders of India during the intervening period, it is also the state of affairs that existed in the early Buddhist era, so that continuity between the earliest and latest times is established"(22).

The Huns invaded India around 500 A.D. They had established a kingdom in northern India. There were important consequences for the caste system. The foreign invaders "yielded to the assimilative powers of Hinduism, they accepted...the customs of the higher civilization, and in the end came to be considered, and to consider themselves, members of Hindu society. Clans that won chieftainships usurped the social rank and the title of Kshatriya or Rajput; the rank and file became tribal castes, Gujars and others"(24). Blunt argues that this is what has happened to all cultures that have either been indigenous before the Hindus conquered India or later invaded the Hindu society. And he argues furthermore that the vrisala and ^vatya castes mentioned in the Manu were really such tribal castes originating from outside. According to him barbarous invasions did also strengthen the tendency to endogamy among the Hindus and thus ^{added} abet in the development of the caste system. Lastly, he draws another conclusion from the Hun invasion. About the Kshatriya caste, and their successors the Rajput or Chattri caste, he says: "We see foreign and aboriginal families becoming Rajputs, merely in virtue of the fact that they were rulers of kingdoms. The conclusion is clearly that in ancient India a Hindu or Hinduized ruler d e f a c t o o obtained recognition as

a Rajput d e j u r e. And though we know little that is definite about the castes to which more ancient sovereigns belonged, yet it seems always to be taken for granted that they were Kshatriyas by position, whilst it is certain that many of them were not Kshatriyas by birth" (25).

"During the Buddhist era, the Brahmin's power suffered eclipse: Buddhism, a Kshatriya religion, was a definite revolt against Brahmanical ritual and against Brahmanical metaphysics. But Brahmanism... was never entirely destroyed. Under the Gupta dynasty when Brahmanical learning became widely diffused, the Brahmin's ascendancy, both spiritual and temporal, revived, and it increased during the troubled period which came with the destruction of the old Arya nobility (since the Kshatriya was the martial caste they suffered heavily in the invasions and were sapped of their strength). Once the Kshatriyas had been ousted by Hinduized foreigners, the Brahmins, the chief remaining link with the past, obtained the social hegemony which had formerly belonged to the Kshayriyas, never again to lose it" (28). It could be added to this that the Kshatriya being the natural rivals of the Brahmins and at the same time being the caste that opposed the invaders it seems to be quite natural that the Brahmins, once the invaders had established themselves, should ally themselves with the latter.

The Kshatriyas were even more depleted of their strength when the Muslims invaded India. Actually, they were considered more or less as extinguished. "This shadowy existence of the Kshatriyas rendered it unnecessary for the Brahmins, even if they wished it, to curtail their privileges except in very few particulars which touched the interests of the Brahmin caste" (Ghurye 1957:102). At the end of this period the Vaisyas and the Shudras are almost indistinguishable, but the Shudras are being, especially in northern India, divided into two ranked categories.

In the 13th century there were many Shudra saints proclaiming easy salvation for the Shudras. This was a result of the fact that the Shudras had been allowed some religious autonomy, at least in northern India. But still they are considered inferior even in the egalitarian Vaishnavit^e cult. The starting point of the appeal of the saints seems to have lain in the fact that "the Sudra was exhorted to mutter the descriptive names of God for his salvation. This method of spiritual betterment was gradually becoming an integral part of the developing creeds of Saivism and Vaishnavism. About the beginning of this period or a little earlier...the importance of muttering the names of God was freely acknowledged in the Brahmanic works." (103-104). It seems thus that the Shudra saints

did not act in defiance of the Brahmanic religion, in a sort of revolt against their lowly status in society, but that they had the backing of the Brahmanic philosophy. At the same time, however, they freed the Shudras from Brahmanic ritual dominance, so in that field one may be able to speak about a rebellion against the Brahmins. But it should also be remembered that these Shudra saints upheld the four varnas, including their own inferiority. But there was at that time a revolt against the caste system that failed, however, and gave rise to a new caste.

In the 17th and 18th centuries there were other revolts against the caste system. At the same time this period saw a steady growth in the concept of pollution. "Untouchability...(was) graded according to the supposed impurity of the object"(105). This means that the defiling categories were accordingly elaborated. And "in the sphere of religion the lot of these people (the Untouchables) is sought to be improved for the first time in the history of Hinduism" (106). The Brahmin is allowed to live on agriculture if Shudras do the actual work for him. And as far as the Kshatriyas are concerned, other castes take up their ancient profession. In the field of marriage endogamy was complete.

Here one can see the influence from Islam on Hinduism in matters relating to the despised categories in society. Islam's insistence on the equality of all men changed the view of some of the Hindus in favour of the Untouchables. "...the doctrinal liberalization in the matter of contact and food...noticed in some movements and even the doings in this line of some of the outstanding personalities of their time must be credited to the influence of Islamic doctrine and practice" (110-111).

This is in short the development of the caste system in India up to the time when the British influence started to make itself felt. It can be noted that just in the same way as the important concepts of the Hindu philosophy went through a history of development and change, the concept of caste has also been modified over time.

Hinduism developed through influences from outside, which can be clearly shown, and because of internal changes that are more difficult to ascertain, at least for the earlier periods, it developed to become an ideology, but it has throughout its history been the most potent ideology in India. The Brahmins and the Kshatriyas were the ones that benefited from the religion and they also worked together in order to uphold the society as it stood. But at the same time they

were in conflict with each other as to whom should be on top of the coalition. The alliance between the temporal rulers and the legitimizing priesthood was thus an inherently unstable one. And the Brahmins started out as the leaders but the Kshatriyas were able to get on top under the ideology of Buddhism which rivalled the Brahmanic interpretation of the world. Here it can clearly be seen how a political ideology legitimizes itself by offering a reinterpretation of the problems of existence and being. That is, it becomes a theology as well as a political instrument. Through pressure from outside the Brahmins were able to reassert themselves and have since then remained the leading caste. But Hinduism was never able to establish itself as the only ideology. The competing religions of Islam, Jainism and Buddhism existed alongside with it and all the religions had a knowledge of each other, and things were not defined exclusively in terms of any of them. The concept of 'caste' which is an important part of tradition can thus be seen to be not static but dynamic and changing. At every point of time it legitimizes a certain power structure in society and has to be seen as one institution among many. It is the chief organiser of inter-personal relations among the Indians

and derives its potency, from the very fact that it is "tradition" and as such has an authority of its own; it is a symbol of how the society is organized, and this, in turn is tied up with caste as an ingredient in the whole Hindu philosophy which has the same age-old authority and ability to compel by the internalization of symbols. And the two then support each other, both having both a material and a symbolic aspect. This is, again, shown in the alliance between the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas. And they could, furthermore, afford to be rivals, since they were in no way threatened by any rival definition of reality from below. The importance of the material variable can be seen from the fact that when the Kshatriyas were strong enough they developed an ideology of their own to support their claim to superiority. On the other hand, the strength of the symbolic variable shows itself in the fact that the alien rulers took on the caste of the old Kshatriyas and acknowledged the already established Brahmins as their ritual superiors. Here it is very likely that the written sources were important, since the early invaders were probably illiterate and in the contact with the sophisticated Hindu religion they were at a disadvantage, many of them being barbarians. In this case it is significant that the religion

that seems to have modified Hinduism most was the religion of Islam which itself had written sources.

Having traced the history of caste the next step will be to treat the caste system as a synchronic structure in order to understand how it works and is maintained. This will be done considering some anthropological material that deals with caste. Then the caste system of the area with which this thesis deals, viz., western U.P. and the Union Territory of Delhi, will be described.

In discussions about caste anthropologists have tended to use the word in two different senses: "As an ethnic category it refers exclusively to a system of social organisation peculiar to Hindu India, but as a sociological category it may denote almost any kind of class structure of exceptional rigidity" (Leach 1960:1).

This latter view has been taken by Bailey and Berreman. They see caste as primarily a hierarchical organization of society. According to Bailey, castes are: a) Exclusive (one always belongs to one group only), b) Exhaustive (the groups include all members of the society), c) Ranked. These three characteristics are common to all forms of social stratification, Bailey notes, but the following are peculiar to caste: d) Closed groups

(recruitment by birth only), e) Summation of roles, f) Co-operative. (Bailey 1963:121). And Berreman defines caste in the following way: "C a s t e s a r e r a n k e d e n d o g m o u s d i v i s i o n s o f s o c i e t y i n w h i c h m e m b e r s h i p i s h e r e d i t a r y a n d p e r m a n e n t" (Berreman 1963:198). He states that this is a definition that is cross-culturally valid, and he qualifies it for India: "In India caste groups are specifically characterized by (1) a common traditional occupation and/or a claim to common origin, and (2) a ritual status which must be maintained and which can be defiled by specified types of behaviour and contacts with other groups" (Berreman 1963:198). Leach, on the other hand, argues that one has to look at caste in a Pan-Indian setting. "Caste, in my view, denotes a particular species of structural organization indissolubly linked with...a Pan-Indian civilization. Consequently I believe that those who apply the term to contexts wholly remote from the Indian world invariably go astray"(Leach 1960:5). Dumont, too, argues that caste cannot be divorced from Indian culture. (Dumont 1967:28)

It is obvious that in this thesis that is concerned with the importance of different institutions as material resources and symbols, caste will be considered as a Hindu phenomenon.

It could be argued that as far as social stratification is concerned, different cultures can be seen to have "caste like" structures, but these have to be explained within that particular ideology and can be seen to have been established and maintained in specific historical and social circumstances. And they can only be fully understood in their own terms and with their own connotations. Therefore, they should not be called castes; because they are only "caste like" in the hierarchical sense, which is just one aspect, they are not "caste like" with reference to the social situation in which they exist. They are tied to the other institutions in the society in their own way, as it were.

The important units in the caste system are the so-called, subcastes (jati). They are the "castes" that are referred to when discussing castes in villages. Then there are the castes as seen over whole areas, represented in the villages by subcastes. These bigger units, which are the "real" castes in terms of name, may vary from area to area, having different

positions in the hierarchy at different places. The units dealt with in this context will be the jati, however, although the castes, whose names they bear will be referred to in a descriptive sense.

It is to be noted that the four varnas are not very important in determining caste status, except for the Brahmins, of course, who hold a ritual position qualitatively different from the others. The other three varnas are made up of several castes who compete between themselves on an inter-varna basis for ritual superiority, this being the legitimization of their political status.

At the bottom of the caste system there is a qualitative change between untouchables and the others, similar to that at the top. Thus the caste system is divided into three segments: Brahmins, the other clean castes, untouchables.

Caste is based on division of labour. "...each group has only a limited range of potential activities" (Bailey 1963:110).

And this specialization necessitates cooperation between the units in order to make the whole system work. "...a caste does not exist by itself. A caste can only be recognized in contrast to other castes with which its members are closely involved in a network of economic, political and ritual relationships.

Furthermore, it is precisely with these intercaste relationships that we are concerned when we discuss caste as a social phenomenon. The caste society as a whole is, in Durkheim's sense, an organic system with each particular caste and sub-caste fitting a distinctive functional role. It is a system of labour division from which the element of competition has been largely excluded" (Leach 1960:5).

As a static picture the above can serve as an illustration of the ideal model of caste society. The different units are self contained with kinship confined to the caste and no such relations to any other caste. Each caste has its own task to perform and all units are necessary. But Leach goes even further. He argues that "members of the high status 'dominant caste', to whom the low status groups are bound, generally form a numerical majority and must compete among themselves for the services of individual members of the lower 'castes'" (6). And this is elaborated: "...in a caste society, status and security are polarized...In a class-society the 'people at the bottom' are those who have been forced there by the ruthless processes of economic competition; their counterparts in a caste society are members of some closely organized kinship group who regard it as their privileged

right to carry out a task from which all other members of the total society are rigorously excluded" (6). This seems to be a somewhat untrue picture of the caste system. It is true that the members of the lowest castes have not been forced into their lowly position through competition with others. They were born into this position. But this does not mean that they are in any privileged position as far as security of their occupation is concerned. The families of the artisan castes are tied as families to families in the other castes. Leach thinks that if one of the high-caste employers does not please the low caste specialist, then the latter can change employer and he in turn stands there without a specialist. And this in turn would be aggravated by the fact that the high castes are so numerous that it would be difficult for him to find a new specialist. Now, one has to remember that castes are groups and no movement of individuals is possible outside the caste system. If there is going to be a movement in the hierarchy the whole caste has to move. This means that the whole caste acts as a unit. If a specialist from one of the artisan castes, then, were to discontinue his relationship with a high-caste family he could only switch employer within that same caste. This does not in any way change his overall position. And,

furthermore, it is not certain that the high-caste members would allow him to discontinue his relationship with the high-caste family. If such a dispute arose the matter would be a caste dispute with the two castes against each other.

And since the 'dominant caste' in a village is the landowning caste the dispute is bound, other things being equal, to end with the victory of the dominant caste, because, as Mayer states:

"In a farming community, ownership of land is the main source of wealth and command over the services of others" (Mayer 1960:90).

Leach is right in stressing cooperation between the castes, since most of the castes are specialists with their special function in the ongoing process of society. There are few occupations open to all, notably agriculture, but that can be left aside for the moment. But he is wrong in thinking that this ideal model of cooperation between castes does necessarily fit the system as it works in everyday life. Disputes between families of different castes often lead, especially if one of the parts to the dispute is a family from the dominant caste, to caste disputes and then the resources at the disposal of the castes become crucial. And here the dominant caste is vastly superior. That it should happen like that is of course due to the fact that castes are close-knit units with a common interest in the affairs of their members.

However, Leach also acknowledges the fact that in "any caste system the factional rivalries among members of the locally privileged caste or castes are likely to be acute, but taken together these local 'twice-born' form a high status corporation for whose benefit the whole rest of the system appears to be organized." (9). Leach divorces the inter-caste activities of families standing in jajmani relationships to each other from the positions that the castes, taken as groups, have in the system, but due to the close-knit nature of the groups the two cannot be separated. Castes or subcastes are not only discrete units from the material aspect, they are also different in the symbolic field. Berreman states: "...caste members share a culture which differs slightly from that of other castes" (Berreman 1963: 200), and "Because caste members regard their own caste as having common and unique interests and a distinct culture, they are unlikely to identify their interests with the interests of others..." (Berreman 1967:358). The result of this is of course that society is fragmented into well-defined entities with a strong corporate sense. "By fractionating society, a caste system makes each group dependent upon its own resources for its overall power in the society" (358). But if society is to function this fragmentation must somehow be overcome. To begin with

there is a cohesive force in the fact that the whole village is dependent upon the landowning caste or castes for livelihood. Every year at harvest time certain castes get their share from the grain heap. Furthermore, the landowning castes are both numerically strong and have the greater part of the wealth there is in the village. Bailey writes: "Castes form a system because each caste has differential access to power. There is a concentration of force in the hands of one caste, and this serves as a sanction on the integrity of the system" (Bailey 1963:110), and "only the dominant caste has an autonomous political existence, not as a corporate political group, but as a field for political competition. Certainly no subordinate caste is a corporate political group" (118). This, it would seem, would only be the case when the dominant caste was not faced with pressure from below. If the ecological conditions changed, it might be possible for the lower castes to challenge the system and this would make it necessary for the dominant caste to close ranks in order to counter the threat.

McKim Marriott has commented on the power relations in the caste system: "Differences of wealth, especially landed wealth, naturally give rise to many parallel kinds of asymmetrical interaction among members of higher and lower castes" (McKim Marriott 1965:20).

The caste system then rests on a basis formed by the differential access to power that is present in the Indian situation. But this material aspect in itself is insufficient to explain the fact that the system is able to go on functioning over time.

It is certainly an important factor, since it gives a category of people the power to use force against other categories who do not benefit materially from the system. But there is also the symbolic aspect to it. This caters for the day to day working of the system and this is where symbols and ritual come in. And people can actually see the system working and this is bound to impress them and colour their view of it.

On the other hand, it is true that people in inferior positions are not happy with the system and they deny that they should occupy these positions. "With regard to caste...most people... come to accept their position, though not necessarily to like it" (Berreman 1963:204). If this is true then there must be some reason why they do not revolt. The material, i.e. power, situation is of course a barrier but there is also the fact that revolt is not thought of. Obviously, one has then to deal with the internalization of symbols and their effect on the conscious and subconscious minds. People are brought up in a certain society and naturally acquire the culture and the

values of that society. The symbols, once internalized, start to have a force of their own, as Turner points out, with regard to the emotional and ideological poles which they have (Chapter I). This, in turn, implies that this ideology, as the case may be, has to be maintained in some way. In this sense the whole caste system can be treated as one big ritual serving to impress the people with the importance of maintaining it and stressing its normative aspects. As Srinivas writes: "The concept of pollution governs relations between different castes. This concept is absolutely fundamental to the caste system and along with the concepts of k a r m a and d h a r m a it contributes to make caste the unique institution it is" (Srinivas 1952:28). The concepts that have mythical sanctions, karma and dharma, are then drawn into the social system and become powerful sanctions in favour of it. Furthermore, pollution, which has to be treated as ritual, since it expresses purely symbolical aspects, takes up a great deal of the conscious activities of the people, since the members of the society (we are talking about the village situation)⁽¹⁾ are constantly in interaction and have to abide by the rules laid down for inter-caste behaviour. Pollution, thus, is always stressed in daily life. This has been stressed by Dumont: "...the

priest, the Brahmin, is highest in status even when he is poor and materially dependent. In the oldest texts, referring to the v a r n a order, priesthood is set above, that is, it encompasses rulership; and at the same time these 'twin forces' together encompass all the rest. We may draw two consequences. First, the form of this pure hierarchy, in principle independent of power, will be ritual or ritualistic: the opposition of pure and impure may be the only possible form of this abstract hierarchy; the systems of castes (j a t i) thus has its roots in the system of the four v a r n a(s)...Secondly, while rulership is devaluated in terms of the whole, it takes place immediately after priesthood. What is more, it participates in it; it is tinged with it in relation to the lower statuses. This can be understood in terms of the structure of hierarchy, and it is also a factual necessity, for if it is necessary that force should be legitimized into power, this very legitimation cannot but colour it with the value principle. In other terms, it is not possible to go further than does the system of caste-and-v a r n a in the devaluation of power" (Dumont 1967:34). Here Dumont stresses the fact that, according to him, the caste system in India has to be seen as a dichotomy between pollution and purity and the whole hierarchy of relations is

encompassed by this idea. This is obviously true in the symbolic field and it also explains the qualitative difference between the Brahmins and the other clean castes and between them and the untouchables. This is a symbolic difference with a clear force of its own, although Berreman states that "a powerful low caste or a relatively weak high caste is an anomaly" (Berreman 1967:357). This may be true in most cases but it is definitely not true in the case of the Brahmins who always enjoy ritual superiority no matter how poor they may be. The symbolic aspect is here completely divorced from any material basis.

The caste system as ritual can be said, then, to take place within the dichotomy of purity and pollution. This constant ritual has been described by McKim Marriott, who writes:

"Residents of both Kishan Garhi and Ram Nagla (the two villages McKim Marriott studied) villages say they are able to form exact opinions about the relative ranks of castes according to certain ritual interactions - i.e., formalized, symbolic gestures between persons of different castes resembling the gestures used in religious worship" (McKim Marriott 1965:16).

Here there is a clear connection between the symbolic expressions of rank in the social system and the ritual gestures used in

communicating with the divine. Furthermore, these gestures express hierarchy in everyday life. And both through the connection with religion and through the frequent repeating of the gestures the people on the ground are impressed by the values of the hierarchy and the symbols, already once internalized are, in a way, constantly being internalized. People are constantly being told in symbolic terms that this reality is the only reality and they believe it both consciously and, what is even more important, subconsciously. The subconscious aspect is the component that continues to work even after that the individual has been consciously convinced that the system is wrong and not the right ideology. Traditions are hard to overcome even for those who try.

Interactions between people can thus be seen to have a connection with the inter-personal relations as they are set out in the Hindu philosophy, and the concepts of karma and dharma enter the social context at this point. They are symbols for a whole philosophy about life and eternity and are, since they encompass such enormously vast areas of thought, very powerful and can be understood by people because they sum up all these things within two short words. Understood, that is, as concepts traditionally

used, not necessarily the philosophical intricacies of these concepts. Berreman notes that the concepts of karma and dharma play an important role when people in the caste system deliberate their respective positions. That is to say, they express their lot in these concepts. They talk in this way even if they are not content with their position. Thus, the very use of concepts like karma and dharma means that they express themselves in Hindu idioms, which in turn means that they do not threaten the caste system as such. They only want to redefine their position within the accepted system. Faced with the contradiction that dharma is just and the fact that there is a will to upward mobility, low-caste people accept caste-dharma but deny "that ones apparent dharma is his real dharma. That is, the individual takes the position that a person should behave according to his caste status but that he or his kin group or jati is not really of the caste or status to which others ascribe him (or them). He is of a higher caste. He aspires to live as a member of his 'true' caste in order to fulfil his true dharma. Therefore his mobility aspirations are legitimized and even made imperative. He rationalizes his own mobility aspirations without challenging the system" (Berreman 1963:224). Here one can see both the use of the concept of dharma

and a subtle redefinition of it. The apparent dharma is not the true dharma, but aspirations are still expressed in terms of dharma. Berreman continues: "The overall pattern is one of high castes justifying their superior position in terms of myths and religious-philosophical beliefs. Subordinate castes assert their superiority to others, and their consequent mobility aspirations, in terms of unrecognized but deserved higher status and dharma than that accorded by society" (224).

Again, relative positions are defended by symbolic means if one is content with one's place in the hierarchy, while those who are dissatisfied give the symbols new content. From the above can be seen that some are satisfied and others dissatisfied, but few seem to challenge the system as such. This is due to a successful (from the system's point of view) internalization of symbols and a similarly successful maintenance of the potency of these symbols. And, in a "normal" situation, it will be seen that "all castes are so imbued with the value of hierarchy that none wants to associate with those it considers inferior" (224). And those who are being discriminated against "direct their resentment not at the intergroup phenomenon as such, but at the manifestation of it which affects them personally. They resent not caste

discrimination, but discrimination directed against themselves" (224). The same thing is described elsewhere: "So great and so complete was the mental conditioning of the people with the aid of religion and the theories of trans migration and of K a r m a that all sense of revolt in the minds of the majority community, which had to toil not only for its own upkeep but for the upkeep of the exploiting upper castes, was completely eliminated. Even the untouchables believed that if they carried out their duties which were ordained by Providence in this life uncomplainingly, willingly, and obediently, they would probably be born in a higher group in their next birth" (Report of the seminar on Casteism 1955:27,28). This exposition of caste started with a description of some of the more important concepts in Hinduism. Concepts that have changed over time to acquire the appearance they have today in the minds of people. These concepts are tradition. They are institutions that compel action. Their content may change and be redefined, but to the people who live them they are eternal. These concepts tied together religion and the social order, the latter being defined by the former and in turn, over time, giving new meanings to the concepts. The social order

was conceived of in terms of castes. Castes were placed in a hierarchy; there were the four varnas and there were the thousands of subcastes, jati. The varnas have kept their importance as far as the Brahmins are concerned, that is to say, the qualitative distinction between Brahmins and the other castes follow varna lines. But the important units in the villages were the jati. Caste as an institution has both material and symbolic aspects. The material aspect is concerned with where in the caste system a particular individual finds himself. The higher castes have the political power and the lower castes are relatively powerless. The relations between castes (jati) which are based on division of labour, are expressed in terms of lasting relationships between individual families. But quarrels take on a caste nature due to the corporate organization of the castes. In such quarrels the dominant caste have a great advantage, since it commands most of the wealth there is in the village. Such a dominant caste may be either dominant in the village or in the whole area. If it is dominant in the area it is made up of the jati in that area. These jati may, however, be very dissimilar although they are recognized as belonging to one caste.

Caste has also a symbolic aspect. Through internalization of symbols, the values of which are constantly being repeated, the values of the hierarchy are constantly being reaffirmed. Caste stands in direct connection with the Hindu religion and derives its potency from this. The caste system is tradition with its own history and its values are seldom questioned even by those who suffer by having been born into inferior positions. The symbolic aspect of caste has thus a force of its own which can compel people's actions.

The caste system of the area will be described as far as is relevant for the case studies in Chapter III. First there will be a general survey of the whole area and then the castes that are important to the discussion will be treated in more detail. Schwartzberg has made a general survey of the castes of the Delhi territory and the U.P. The region that is being treated in this thesis, he calls region B. He writes: "... probably the most extensive area of India without a clearly dominant caste, and possibly has a more ramified caste structure than any other part of the subcontinent." (Schwarzberg 1968:101). And "The most numerous caste of Region B are the lowly Chamars" but "over no extensive tract do they constitute over a fifth, or less than an eighth of the total population". (102)

In the Upper Doab the Jats are important. This area lies between the Jumna and the Ganges and it seems to be "an eastward extension of the great area over which Jats are the dominant landowning caste, this subregion is apparently a frontier of relatively recent Jat expansion, with noticeable lower proportions of that caste in the total population than in Punjab or Rajasthan ... Among the traditional landowning castes, the Rajputs ... appear to outnumber the Jats in certain tracts, especially towards the east, while in the infertile, sandy riverain along the Jumna, the traditional pastoral caste of Gujars largely cultivators in practice, is locally dominant". (103)

The three landowning castes seem to be unusually exclusive at the village level. "After Chamars and Jats, Brahmans are the third most numerous caste. Like the Chamars, the Brahmans are ubiquitous, but are particularly important toward the south, where they, too, outnumber the Jats. The only other castes of particular note are the merchant caste of Vaishyas (Baniyas) whose greater than average concentration in this intensively irrigated area presumably reflects high productivity and commercialized agriculture; and the urban Sheikhs, who in 1931 were by far the leading caste in the city of Delhi and presumably in certain other cities as well" (103).

These are the general characteristics of this area, the part of which that is going to be treated here will be the Delhi district and the northernmost part, viz., Saharanpur district. First the two important landholding and cultivating castes, the Jats and the Rajputs will be considered. "We find the Jat village settlements to be among the most strongly constituted; often there is a considerable clan feeling, and not unfrequently much pride of descent from some noted ancestor, to be found among them; and there is always a co-sharing or joint-claim to the whole village area.

Sometimes we find Jat settlements on areas much larger than the 'normal' village. As a matter of fact, it is highly probable that the Jat villages represent both the clan settlements or settlement of 'democratic' colonising groups, and also the estates of dignified leaders or chiefs, very likely of half Rajput origin, whose descendants form the existing communities" (Baden-Powell 1896:216). It should be noted in this context that Baden-Powell is not only talking about the Jats in the Delhi area, but is treating the Jats of upper India as a whole. The Jats in Punjab, to which the Delhi territory belonged at the time when Baden-Powell wrote, had traditional customs of their own, but they regarded property as belonging to the

joint-family as such. The Jat clans of northern India do not have uniform customs with regard to this, but all hold "that ancestral land belongs to the whole family" (217).

The Rajputs, which is the martial caste of northern India, suffered, as has been shown above, heavily under the different invasions and one result was that they migrated eastwards under Muslim rule. They drove off the earlier inhabitants before they settled in their new areas. (Blunt 1931:166).

Baden-Powell gives a similar account: "Indeed, it is worthy of remark that in so many of the districts of the North-West Provinces the Rajput proprietary bodies are locally called, not Rajput, but 'T h a k u r' (lord or baron), implying that their original position was that of local lords. Throughout the districts we find that Rajput clans or single adventurers came to the place when driven from other provinces by the Muhammadan conquest" (Baden-Powell 1896:124).

After these general notes on the castes found in the area the important castes in the Delhi district and in Saharanpur district will be described from a general point of view.

After that the different caste institutions will be taken up and dealt with.

The Jats in the Delhi area are divided into two parts, one southern, centring round the town of Ballabgarh, where their history is connected with that of the Jat rajas who had their seat there. These rajas ruled in that area for most of the 18th and part of the 19th centuries. The other main Jat division in the Delhi district comprises the Jats of the middle and northern parts. They have no historic connection with these Jat rajas.

The Rajputs in the Delhi district live more scattered. They are not regarded as very good cultivators and own a few villages.

The Brahmins in Delhi practise agriculture, which also the Gujars do, but they are less successful. (Gazetter, Delhi District 1883-1884:72-76)

As for the Saharanpur district in U.P. the Gazetteer has the following to say about some of the castes there: "The foremost place is taken by the Chamars, who occupy a very humble position in the social scale but far outnumber any other caste in all parts of the district... They comprise the great mass of the rural labouring population" (100). Next in numerical strength are the Gujars, who are the largest proprietors in the district. After them come the Rajputs who are both Hindus and Muslims. Many of them are, in fact, not

Rajputs. Those who really can support their claim form a distinct caste and often cultivate their own fields. The Rajputs are divided into clans.

The Brahmans are considerable landowners but do not normally work their fields. They hire people to do the work for them.

Another caste of importance to be mentioned is the Banias.

They are wealthy and own large areas of land. The Jats in the district came originally from Punjab; they are good cultivators.

The Musalman castes are made up of Sheikhs, Rajputs, Gujars,

Pathans, Faqirs, Qassabs, Jhojhas, Hajjams, Saiyids and

some others. They are of minor importance to this discussion and will not be further dealt with. (Gazetteer, Saharanpur district 1909:100-111).

The institution that governs relations within the caste is known as the panchayat. There are also panchayats that

govern relations within the village as a whole or between

villages. These panchayats are often seen as the traditional

means of settling disputes and their success in the past is

often exaggerated when compared to the poor performance of

today. Retzlaff distinguishes four different types of panchayats:

the caste panchayat, the general meeting panchayat, the

farmer-retainer panchayat, the single purpose panchayat.

They were all mainly adjudicative in nature. "At least one caste panchayat exists for each caste in the village, and its jurisdiction extends to all members of that caste resident in the village. Its primary function is to uphold the pattern of social behaviour and the religious values of the members of that caste. It is also used to further the group interests of the caste.

The panchayat itself is generally comprised of the minimal lineage segments within that caste grouping" (Retzlaff 1962:18).

Blunt writes about this saying that within the caste there are smaller panchayats within the same endogamous group. Here Blunt means that the jatis, living in different neighbourhoods have their own panchayats as well as there being a panchayat for the whole caste in the region. This regional panchayat is inter-village in nature. Pradhan shows how the intervillage khap panchayat was originally a Jat idea, but it has been taken up by other castes as well. "All castes use the term 'khap panchayat' even of a meeting held by their own caste if it is organized at the level of all the khap villages" (Pradhan 1966:115). On the other hand, there are also councils for the settling of disputes within the lineage. (34).

Blunt distinguishes between permanent and impermanent caste panchayats. "The first or 'permanent' type is a p a n c h a y a t which possesses one or more permanent officers, whose duty it is to bring offences to its notice, and who have power to convene it whenever necessary". "The second or 'impermanent' p a n c h a y a t is one that possesses no such officer, nor any committee save such as may be appointed for the duration of any particular session" (Blunt 1931:105,106). The Gujars have permanent panchayats. So have the Chamars, the Doms, the Ahir and the Jats in some places. Some of the Rajputs have impermanent panchayats. Some Jats have impermanent panchayats. "But many of the 'twice-born' groups - all Brahmins, most Rajputs and the highest Vaisyas... - have no p a n c h a y a t of any kind. They rely solely on the force of public opinion: the offender is informally ostracized..and remains so all his days, and his children after him" (125). Ostracism was also the strongest punishment that a panchayat could mete out.

"The general meeting type of panchayat, the second of the traditional types of panchayats, was concerned with the broad range of problems which would now be described as civil and criminal in nature. The membership of this panchayat consisted of the important leaders of each of the castes in the village." The size

and composition of the general meeting panchayat varied directly with the nature of the problem before it...However, attendance and effective participation must be distinguished. From available evidence it is certain that these meetings have always been controlled by the members of the dominant caste in Khalapur (the village that Retzlaff studied), the rajputs, and more precisely by the leadership group within that caste, i.e., the joint farm family leaders" (Retzlaff 1962:20,21).

The third form of panchayat is described thus: "...the farmer-retainer panchayat. Its composition is quite flexible and is tailored to meet the needs of the situation". Retzlaff notes how the farmers were related to the other castes in the village on a family basis and that the farmer among other things was supposed to act as an arbitrator in disputes between his retainers. This gave, in Khalapur, the Rajputs great power over the lower castes, due mainly to the fact that economic and political power was so concentrated in favour of the landowning caste (the Rajputs). This idea of referring disputes upwards in the caste hierarchy has also been noted by others, even if it does not necessarily follow the lines of farmer-retainer. Lower castes let the elders of the dominant caste in the village arbitrate their disputes. (Srinivas 1960:8) Pradhan, for instance, notes

how the low castes often invite members of the dominant caste to their caste council. (Pradhan 1966:187). These three variants seem to indicate first of all the importance of the dominant caste versus the low castes, which could be expected. In the farmer-retainer panchayat, in the arbitration by the elders of the dominant caste and in the invitation to members of the dominant caste to low-caste councils (the two latter examples may in fact refer to the same thing), one can see that the only panchayats that could be called pure caste panchayats must have been those of the dominant caste itself. In all the other instances, the "caste panchayat" was tainted with the political reality of the dominance of the landowning caste. It should be stressed that it is an ideal situation that is being discussed, that is to say, the low castes are not, in this exposition, due to changing ecology and/or ideology in opposition to the dominant caste.

"The fourth traditional type of panchayat...is...the single purpose panchayat. Under this category fall many of the inter-caste meetings of the village. There is little sense of permanence or continuity of membership, and they are generally composed of the leadership element of various participating castes.

At these panchayats an attempt is generally made to arrive at

some type of decision concerning a problem affecting the castes involved in the panchayat" (Retzlaff 1962:23). This panchayat, then, deals with disputes between a few castes and it does not involve the village as a whole. But Retzlaff does not say anything about the role of the dominant caste in this type of panchayat, but it is likely that it was involved, especially if the dispute was of a serious nature.

It is important to note that decisions were arrived at in these panchayats, not by majority voting, but by discussion that lasted until consensus was achieved. This consensus, however, often reflected the interests of the dominant caste. This was very true of the general meeting panchayat, which was, as noted above, dominated by the landowning caste.

This discussion about panchayats has been necessitated by the fact that they are institutions whereby castes settle disputes and arrive at decisions within themselves and adjudicate inter-caste disputes. The panchayats are therefore the logical institution to follow after the institution of caste. They have the same aspects as all institutions have, that is to say a symbolic and a material. This means that they can be used by actors in a limited number of ways. But, as with all institutions, all actors cannot use them with the same efficiency; some actors are favoured, they

control the institution, others do not control it and they may be, in an extreme case, completely unable to use the institution. In such an instance, they are trapped in the institution, as it were, and it has only limitations for them. A limited number of limitations that is.

The wider traditional political system was mostly limited to tax collection and the government did not interfere to any great extent in the local affairs. Where the land was given as a grant to a landlord he acted as intermediary between the state and the village. As a whole the Hindu society was remarkably unaffected by the invading peoples. The long era of Muslim occupation affected land holding very little. There were grantees and a land-revenue administration, but tenures remained more or less unaffected and with them authority patterns. The indirect influence, however, was not inconsiderable. "In the first place may be mentioned the general introduction of names and terms connected with land tenures, which have had a gradual tendency to fix ideas and crystallise forms, although in themselves these words and terms rarely imported any new ideas. The Moslem governments, in fact, everywhere adopted the customs they found ready, and the old things were called by new names" (Baden-Powell 1896:221). The most important reorganization of

the administrative hierarchy was accomplished by Akbar in the 16th century. He divided the country into Subahs which in turn were divided into Sarkars. These were made up of parganas which in turn comprised several villages. In each district there was a revenue collector with a staff. "At the village level was the village M u q a d d a m (Headman) and the village P a t w a r i (accountant). And, be it noted, these men were not State employees but servants of the village, and their selection to the post, as also their continued employment, was dependent on their enjoying the goodwill of the village community" (Malaviya 1956:139).

The institutions of the government left the village rather unchanged and the authority patterns were very much the same up to the arrival of the British. The pattern of land tenure that existed from pre-Muslim times, and which as the very basis for the social structure, was left rather unperturbed. These different forms of land tenure that existed in the Delhi territory and in the western part of the U.P. can be characterized as mainly being village communities. That is to say, there were very few big landlords in this area. Thus, Baden-Powell writes with reference to some land holding communities around Delhi:

"Some of the Aryan agricultural communities appear in a still

purely clan and family stage, and have always remained democratic in their constitution" (Baden-Powell 1896:193). This picture is also applicable to the communities in the Ganges valley.

The different forms of land tenure to be distinguished are: bhaiachara, pattidari and zamindari forms.

The bhaiachara form of land tenure seems to be a Jat principle, although one can find Rajputs practising it as well. The term bhaichara "means held on the custom of the brotherhood - i.e., by the single association of families, usually a clan grown up out of one single family on a large available area which fortune preserved for them till they had filled it all. It implies that particular method of equal allotment of which the type is best illustrated by the oft-quoted Mathura Jat villages...

Holdings made up of specimens of each kind of soil are the characteristic" (356). The second form, pattidari, is characterized by the following features:

"Pattidari was originally employed...to mean any kind of village, so long as it was divided out on the ground into distinct shares or lots. But it soon came to mean, and now ought always to be restricted to, pure pattidari - i.e., where only the ancestral or fractional shares of the law of inheritance are

recognized" (355,356). The zamindari is described by Baden-Powell as a tenure where "the land is held by a landlord or proprietor. The owner or the co-sharing owners of the village are in fact peasant proprietors of the whole, arable and waste together. The term in itself has nothing whatsoever to do with 'joint' or 'several', 'communal' or 'individual'. It only acquires these meanings when another word is added". (355).

Thus, zamindari khalis refers to one single owner, "zamindari mushtarka...means the 'communal' or joint holding of a number of co-sharing proprietors whose interest is not separated by the several allotment of shares on the ground. There are villages of this kind almost always held by a body of co-heirs succeeding to a previous single owner; and in this case they have their d e f i n e d s h a r e s, though the holdings are not partitioned. Hence, from a t e n u r e point of view they are not distinguishable from p a t t i d a r i in the true sense of the term" (355). Bhaiachara tenure, then, implies a sort of communal holding with access to every kind of soil, no fixed shares. The whole is managed together. Pattidari, on the other hand, implies ancestral shares held by different successors to the original owner. But there is of course no i n d i v i d u a l ownership of the land. Lastly, the

zamindari form refers to a single owner or to a body of proprietors, in the latter case the actual tenure being indistinguishable from pattidari. When the village, which had originated as a one-man-owner village, was divided among the descendants, the units that emerged as a result were called patti, thok or tula (there were also other names).

Baden-Powell concludes about northern India: "In Northern India... in spite of the fact that in Oudh there were great landlords called Taluqdars, and that similar landlords appeared in some parts of the North-West Provinces, the prevailing feature was the tenure of joint-villages" (430). Although the term zamindar seems to imply that there were landlords, it should be remembered that the term does not mean what it meant in Bengal, for instance, where it denoted a big landowner and a system of intermediaries between him and the tiller. In the north Indian meaning it referred to a landowner who normally tilled his own land. Again, the system in this area was based on equality between the co-sharers. (2)

Thus, the important institutions that could be drawn upon by the actors have been described. In terms of history the time is before the British occupation. The British time and the change of institutions during that era will be treated later.

The main ideology has been explained in some detail, due to the fact that it still plays such an important role, and the concepts inherent in it have more relevance to the behaviour of people today than have the revenue administration of the Moghuls, to put it crudely. The institutions described were "tradition" when the British entered the scene. They transformed these "traditional" institutions and when one deals with the post-independence era, one has to treat both these pre-British institutions together with the transformed and new institutions that emerged as a result of the British conquest, as tradition. Only then is it possible to understand how it is that actors can use these institutions in the political struggle. And, again, the symbolic/material aspects are indispensable for an understanding of this.

The next part of this chapter will be, then, an exposition of the change in institutions under the British and how this gave certain categories of people access to power.

To begin with, the Hindu world was confronted with the British ideas of western liberal democracy and this added to the people's Weltanschauung. One of the most significant uses of Hindu philosophical concepts in political struggle was of course Gandhi's use of them in his struggle against the British. He

used Hinduism actively and obeying many of the rules and etiquettes that Hinduism laid down. "...Gandhi appears at once to be a man steeped in Indian tradition and at the same time to be perhaps the greatest innovator of all time..." (Bondurant 1963:7). This is of course only one stage in the development of Hinduism, but it is significant that it within itself, carries the seed that perhaps will destroy Hinduism as a religion based on caste. As far as the caste system is concerned, it has of course changed under the British. The British came with a uniform law where everyone was supposedly equal and the law, as such, did not recognize differences in caste status. This did not, however, alter the situation to any significant degree, since the high castes were at the same time the rich castes and the poorer and lowly castes could not afford to go to court, and at the same time the ritual status of the high castes made the lower castes unwilling to challenge them.

One of the most important changes in caste that took place under the British was the rise of caste associations, partly because of better communications. This meant that jatis of the same caste from different areas were able to come into contact with each other, and a solidarity outside the subcaste was being built up. Rudolph and Rudolph mention the fact that the

creation of a market economy and the penetration of the state to the lowest levels of society (note the difference from the Muslim era) were factors conducive to the creation of caste associations. These caste associations were political in nature and aim. They were institutions for the upgrading of the caste as a whole in the hierarchy and basically competitive with respect to other castes; this because their field is the new Indian state. Thus, they worked for change, but this change was conceived of in traditional terms, a staying within the traditional system. But this change was to be achieved mainly through material resources brought about by the British, who did not have an ideology of preservation of castes in the traditional manner. Furthermore, the caste associations themselves were created thanks to material conditions created by the colonial power. The caste association "stands between a purely voluntary association and a caste" (Rudolph & Rudolph 1967:35). Caste associations, then, can be seen as the use of new material opportunities, making old caste aspirations possible, and as such, still remaining within the Hindu ideological concepts. It is social mobility at a new level, but still for old goals. And despite the fact that caste was sometimes challenged it remained as strong as ever. But the caste associations have

introduced a new element in caste ideology by virtue of the fact that they are competitive, thus changing the old idea of co-operation between castes.

The things that were introduced by the British and which had the greatest impact at the local level were the rural self-government institutions, the so called statutory panchayats, and the introduction of private ownership to land coupled with the selection of certain individuals to collect the rent in the villages.

In every village the British appointed a lambardar to collect the rents in the village and "there is an undoubted tendency for the joint-villages, in some cases, to fall under the power of the official l a m b a r d a r s, or headmen, who presume on their position, so that they, few of the larger and wealthier shareholders, exploit the rest to their advantage; while in others bitter party spirit arises and strong factions" (Baden-Powell 1896:436,437). In this way, under the British, all tenure came to be zamindari as far as the official records were concerned. One owner was listed and he was responsible for the payment of the rent to the government. This contributed to the fragmentation of holdings and the selling and mortgaging of land.

In many villages there were one lambardar to every section (patti) in the village and they also had the duties and rights of policemen. Their position with regard to the village panchayat varied with the circumstances. A strong lambardar had much influence, a weak one had less. It is tempting to suggest that with the passing of time, this position, lambardar, which had originated as a result of decisions taken by the colonial power, might be more accepted and the authority it commanded in certain areas of activity would be integrated into the village tradition and as such be indistinguishable from the other traditional positions of authority and consequently would be more influential in the village panchayat.

This creation of "landlords" and the individual ownership of land has been commented upon by Malaviya: "And so 'landowners' came to be created. Along with this, of necessity, came the notion of 'ownership of land', unknown to India before the advent of the British. The occupant of the land possessed the right to hold and cultivate his land subject to the payment of a share of the produce to the State" (Malaviya 1956:148). These were the effects of permanent settlements and the recording of individual holdings.

These were the immediate results in the village of the advent of the British. But before going on to describe the evolution of landholding it could be convenient to outline some of the institutions that were going to be the managing entities of the changes in agricultural law. The institutions that gave different actors the possibility to manoeuvre to gain power in the political sphere were the statutory panchayats created by the British to ensure local level self-government in certain spheres. But first the administrative structure will be briefly outlined. Under the British administrative system all provinces were divided into districts. Sometimes a number of these districts formed divisions. The districts, in turn, were divided "into sub-divisions, these in turn being composed of smaller units called T e h s i l s or T a l u k s made up of a number of villages" (Morris-Jones 1967:21). In these tehsils there were deputy collectors or tehsildars. And in the villages, then, there were the headmen, lambardars, patwaris and also, later in the British administration mukhiya, who took over the police functions from the lambardar. In every tehsil, there seems to have been two or more police stations (Raikes 1852:218).

The idea behind the British administrative system was that "in each unit there should be one official with overriding general responsibility" and "there should be no rigid separation in terms of personnel between administrative and judicial functions" (Morris-Jones 1967:21).

The administrative system of the independent Indian state inherited this structure. The British provinces became States with some modifications in the new set-up, but the main features remain. The main new structure to be created (outside Panchayats, which will be dealt with below) was the Community Development (CD) programme. It ran from district through block (a collection of villages) down to the village and was designed for the general development and modernization of the rural areas. There was a special community development department in the capital, Delhi, which had the ultimate responsibility in problems connected with the development programme.

The above is the "back-bone" as it were on which changes and developments can be hung. It is the "formal" administrative structure that forms the wider system which stands in a mutual relationship with the actors in the village and the other institutions there. The structure that came to have the greatest impact on village government, especially in modern times, was

the statutory panchayats, which were supposed to further local-level self-government in terms couched in the modern British ideology of how decisions should be arrived at at the local level. They were to be elected in a democratic way.

The British started very early with the plans for statutory panchayats but not very seriously, it seems. But in 1907 there was a Royal Commission that worked out recommendations as to how such panchayats were to be created and their area of jurisdiction. And in 1920 there was a U.P. Village Panchayat Act.

"It sought to confer on the Panchayats civil, criminal and also administrative powers" (Malaviya 1956:300). These panchayats were not very successful in carrying out their duties. "Limited as the spheres of the Panchayat activity were under the Act, no advance worth the name was made in the administration of civil or criminal justice in the rural areas or improvement in sanitation and other common concerns of the village" (300).

In Punjab there was a Panchayat Act already in 1912 and another in 1921-1922. It seems that the powers of these panchayats were severely curtailed and "no agency was created to help in the organization of the Panchayats, and the District Collectors had complete control over them" (370). They used to select certain persons to serve on these panchayats. In 1939 there

was a new Panchayat Act in Punjab. The result was that "the 1939 Act did result in considerable advance in the organisation of Panchayats in undivided Punjab where, it is clear, Village Panchayats developed more than anywhere else in pre-Independence days" (370,371). These panchayats were given judicial power and on the financial side they could, among other things, raise taxes, and they also had grants from the government. After Independence there were new Village Panchayat Acts passed by the different state governments. In U.P. there was the Panchayat Raj Act of 1947 that repealed the 1920 Act. Under this Act "a village or group of villages is under the jurisdiction of a 'village government' or assembly (Gaon Sabha), consisting of all sane adults (that is, people 21 years of age or over) within the area for which it is established" (Berreman 1963:284). "The Act provided the election by the Gaon Sabha, on the joint electorate system, from among its members, of a P r a d h a n and an U p - P r a d h a n, that is the President and the Vice-President, the term of these offices being three years. Besides this, the Act provided for the election of an executive by the Gaon Sabha, called the Gaon Panchayat, the membership of this body ranging from 30 to 51, seats being reserved for the minority community and scheduled castes. The P r a d h a n and the

U p - P r a d h a n of the Gaon Sabha were required to fill the same posts for the Gaon Panchayat. The Act laid down three years to be the term of office of a member of the Gaon Panchayat and the compulsory retirement of one-third of its membership annually" (Malaviya 1956:301). With regard to finances the Gaon Sabha shall pass the budget annually and consider the accounts of the previous year at another meeting. At these biannual meetings it shall also "consider the biennial reports of business submitted by the P r a d h a n" (301). There is also a judicial branch of the panchayats. That is the Adalat Panchayat. "For constituting the Panchayati Adalats, every district is divided into circles in which the area coming within the jurisdiction of several Gaon Panchayats is combined, care being taken to keep such areas in each circle, as far as possible, contiguous...Each Gaon Sabha is authorised to elect five persons to act as Panches for the Adalat. The panel of 20 to 25 members thus elected to every Panchayati Adalat elects a person as Sarpanch. The term of every panch is fixed at three years from the date of his election...The Sarpanch has to be a man who is able to record proceedings. For the trial of every case, the Sarpanch appoints a Bench of five persons from the panel, and if he is not there, then at least one of the five in the

panel has to be such who is able to record evidence and proceedings.

No Panch or Sarpanch can take part in any case, suit, or proceedings in which any one of them has any interest" (304,305).

Since the interest in this study is focused on the Gaon Panchayat

and the manoeuvres of the actors in the election of that body,

the Gaon Sabha and the Gaon Panchayat shall be dealt with in

somewhat greater detail, while the Adalat Panchayat will have

to be left out of the picture. The Gaon Sabha is "established

as a body corporate by the State" and "it is given the power to

acquire, hold, administer and transfer property, both movable

and immovable, and to enter into contracts, sue and be sued"

(Retzlaff 1962:51). The Gaon Panchayat can borrow money and levy

taxes to finance it. Its functions include general village

maintenance, taking care of the industry and agriculture, medicine,

and it is also in charge of the common grazing grounds.

Between the Punjab Panchayat Act of 1939 and the next Act dealing

with Delhi territory, Delhi had been established as a state of

its own and it adopted its own Panchayat Raj Bill in 1954. It

declares that Gaon Panchayats shall be elected on the basis of

adult suffrage, in a Gaon Sabha, but in addition the "Chief

Commissioner (of Delhi) has the power to nominate a member or

two to a Panchayat" (Malaviya 1956:612). And there are to be

one Pradhan and one Up-Pradhan both serving in the same function on the Gaon Panchayat as well as in the Gaon Sabha. The Sabha meets twice a year, once to pass the budget for the next fiscal year and once to check the accounts for the last year. At both meetings the Pradhan's report of business is to be considered.

"The term of office of the Gram (village) Panchayat P r a d h a n and U p - P r a d h a n shall be three years to be reckoned from the date of election. The Chief Commissioner has the power to extend the term to five years" (613).

There is also a special judicial panchayat. It is called Circle Panchayat. "Every Gaon Sabha is required to elect a number of Panches to Circle Panchayat...The Circle Panchayat is authorised to control and supervise the work of the constituent Gaon Sabha.

A Circle Panchayat Panch is to hold office for three years from the date of his election" (614,615). Since in this case also, the main interest is centred on the Gaon Panchayat, its functions will be outlined briefly. There is a concern with general village maintenance, medicine, development of agriculture and industry, education, the cultivation of waste land, and also management of common grazing grounds" (613). But the Gaon Panchayat shall also function as the channel through which government assistance reaches the village. The Gaon Panchayat can levy taxes for its finances.

The village panchayats in U.P. constituted an entity of their own, that is, there was no other organization higher up in the hierarchy that automatically connected the village panchayat with the district and ultimately with the state government. (3)

In Delhi, which is a very tiny state, there seems to be a provision for at least a minimum of cooperation between the local level and the state level.

In this exposition of institutions, the statutory panchayats of the British and the Panchayati Raj of the post-Independent era, are the most explicit examples of a will to reorganise the traditional village community, based on Hindu thought and categories with its own authority patterns on the basis of Western thought and concepts. The institutions thus created had to collide with the traditional institutions when actors began to use them. The institutions were not neutral but were formed by a certain way of looking at the world and the values connected with it. Therefore, they could not be immediately brought into harmony with each other. This discrepancy that occurs before either the traditional dominant groups have brought the new institutions within their power and can use them to their advantage or traditionally dominated groups have been able by help of the new material resources that these institutions are

expressions of, to gain control over them, is likely to bring about heightened political activity on the part of the different groups. Again, these institutions are expression of a new force that changes the Weltanschauung of the actors and make them susceptible to new values that go with the new ideology, and the actors compete for the institutions which are both a symbol of the new and a platform from which to exercise power. If the traditionally leading groups win no major change is likely to occur. If on the other hand, the dominated groups win change may come, through the changed Weltanschauung, but it is not certain. Old symbols may still be strong enough to have their way.

The formal structures having been outlined so far, it is time to see how the economic relations where being changed by deliberate actions from the state level to conform to a changing ideology.

As has already been noted, the advent of the British meant important changes in land holding. The concept of 'individual ownership of land' was introduced, and Regulation VII, 1822 treated "land tenures as if they resulted from market transactions and existed in a market environment" (Neale 1962:60). With this recognition of individual ownership went the investment in the

zamindars and the former headmen with proprietary rights (they had formerly been mere revenue collectors) and all others were considered to be ryots or tenants liable to rent increases and ejectment.⁽⁴⁾ This tendency was then aggravated by the demand for revenue payments to be made in cash, which threw the cultivators in the arms of the money-lenders. There were certain castes of money-lenders, but those who indulged in the trade came generally from all strata of the society, save the lowest. The money-lenders were able to get the title of zamindars, since the latter often could not pay back the loans. (Whitcombe 1968:208) The result being that more and more land went from the hands of the original proprietors to the money-lenders who had no grasp whatsoever of the art of cultivating. Litigiousness rose and the newly introduced British courts were crowded with litigants.* Pressure on land was considerable increased after 1858 when European troops to a great extent replaced the sons and younger brothers of the zamindars, who had turned to a military career in the Indian Regiments when the land could not support them.

*It is interesting to note that this "rise in litigiousness" which is so often mentioned, is explained, in one instance, as a mere statistical artifact following the introduction of courts "reflecting the transplantation of disputes to a new location where they were easier to record". (Rudolph and Rudolph p.261)

At the same time many of the Indians in the civil service were replaced and had to take to agriculture. Since they also came from the upper castes who were the land owning classes in Hindu society it meant that pressure on land increased. There was rapid sub-division and the plots of land that emerged were hopelessly uneconomic. Revenues went up and the zamindars squeezed their tenants before becoming ruined themselves. The Government had to start schemes for the uplifting of poor zamindars.

From 1859 and onwards the land owners' powers were restricted in relation to the tenants: anyone who had held land for 12 consecutive years acquired the title of occupancy tenant. This meant that the land he cultivated was inherited by his son, but he could not transfer it. Enhancement of rent was limited. As a result eviction increased. Act of 1873 stated that all who had held the same rent since 1795 or for 20 years should be called fixed-rate tenants. Act of 1881: "Tenants at revenue rates - those who had paid the same rate paid by co-sharers in the mahal (the basic administrative unit) to meet the revenue - could not be removed nor their rents enhanced except when the revenue was increased" (Neale 1961:84). In 1901 the U.P. Land Revenue Act was passed and it stated that the units of revenue

should henceforth be called mazras and a lambardar should be in charge of each of them. In the 1920s it was finally decided to bring most rents under administrative control. In Agra, for instance, a rent officer should fix the rent every 20 years. It was also decided that the land lords should give the tenants a receipt for the rent paid. Many of them did not do this, however, and the tenant did not dare to challenge the far more influential land owner by going to court which he could formally do. In 1926 every tenant who was not an occupancy tenant became a statutory tenant, i.e. his son inherited the holding and held it on the same conditions as his father had done, but after that it reverted to the land owner.

An elected legislature passed in 1939 a Tenancy Act, which took a great step away from a rental market for land. Under it a tenant was allowed to hire labourers and it reduced sir land (land which the zamindar owned personally and supposedly cultivated himself). The tenants, who worked on such sir land, became hereditary tenants. The two most important things about the 1939 Act are the facts that it was the first Act not to be imposed by the British and that it brought the rights of the owner and those of the cultivator very close to each other.

The next important change in agricultural legislation in U.P. came in 1952 when the State government decided to abolish the zamindars and take title to the land itself. This move was designed in order to make sure that absentee landlordship was abolished and to ensure that, to as great an extent as possible, title to the land would rest with the actual cultivator.

"For the rehabilitation of the smaller zamindars, constituting the overwhelming majority, the Act provided for payment of graded rehabilitation grants to intermediaries (i.e. those standing between the cultivator and the State) paying Rs. 5,000 and less as land revenue; the rate of rehabilitation grants ranging from 2 to 20 times the net assets" (Nanavati and Anjaria 1960:245).

Three permanent kinds of tenures were created: Bhumidhari, Sirdari and Asami, roughly comparable to owners, hereditary tenants and statutory tenants. There was also a sort of traditional measure to take care of sir land, adhivasi tenure.

Most important were of course the Bhumidhari rights. The main stipulations were: "The Bhumidhar has exclusive possession of his land and may use it as he pleases, sell it or transfer it in any other way, provided the recipient will not thereafter hold more than thirty acres or that a mortgagee will not take possession" (Neale 1962:226-228). There were strict limitations

on leasing Bhumidhar land and the penalties for breaking the regulations were severe. Bhumidhar rights were granted to those having sir, khudkasht (owner cultivating himself) and grovelands (the holder could not be evicted as long as the trees stood.

This dated back to the period before the British conquest);

"to permanent tenureholders in respect of their grovelands and land personally cultivated; to fixed-rate tenants and rent-free grantees; and to any occupancy, hereditary, patta dawama or istamravi* tenant having the right to transfer by sale. The recipient of bhumidhari rights did not receive these rights on all the sir and khudkasht he held, but only upon his proportionate share in a joint holding" (229). Bhumidhari rights were also given to those who under the U.P. Agricultural Tenants Act X of 1949 were listed as privileged tenants on their payment of ten times their annual rent to the government and thereby getting their rent reduced by fifty per cent, and were safe against ejectment. A sirdar could buy bhumidhari rights by paying ten times his annual rent to the government in a lump-sum or by paying twelve times his annual rent in four instalments over two years. The sirdar himself had exclusive rights over his

*These two categories of tenants were rent-free grantees on sir land.

land if he used it for agricultural or horticultural purposes. He could also let his land on the same conditions as a bhumidhar. In case of illegal transfer the transferee could be ejected. The categories which came to be eligible for acquiring sirdar rights were among others: occupancy tenants who for some reason could not become bhumidhars, hereditary tenants, grantees holding at favourable rates, groveholders, and subtenants of sir and khudkasht owned by landowners who payed more than Rs. 250 in revenue. The last tenure holder in the triology were the asamis. They were a sort of "cross" between a sirdar and a protected sub-tenant. He had the same rights over his land as a sirdar and was also subject to the same restrictions. But he could be ejected if he fell in arrears on his rent when the terms of his holding expired. In the Abolition of Zamindars Act there were also provision for the setting up of co-operative societies. If ten or more bhumidhars or sirdars, owning more than thirty or more acres wanted to register a co-operative farm they could do so. The State could, if it so decided grant facilities to co-operatives. But it could also keep firm control over the co-operatives, since it could make rules for them. In every administrative area a Gaon Samaj (consisting of adults who reside in the area and hold land as bhumidhars, sirdars or asamis)

was established. It should take part in carrying out the land reforms. It was to take possession of vacant land and could admit anyone as a sirdar or an asami on the land.

In 1953 there was a new Act pertaining to land tenure. It was called the U.P. Consolidation of Holdings Act. It "provides for compulsory consolidation whenever the government decides it is ready to consolidate an area" (264). This Act is being implemented rather slowly, partly because of lack of personnel. It was passed because of the increased fragmentation of holdings that was taking place. Administratively a committee was set up named the Land Consolidation Committee which should advise the officer in charge at the village level about the consolidation. The Land Consolidation Committee was drawn from the already existing Land Management Committee which had been set up earlier under the Panchayati Raj Act and which was supposed to supervise the lands that were under the gaon samaj.

The history of land tenure in the North-Western Provinces, later renamed United Provinces and then Uttar Pradesh can be summed up as follows: the most important change in the traditional community was the introduction of "private ownership" which meant that a co-sharer in a zamindari estate, i.e. zamindari in the revenue sense, for instance, could alienate his part without

consulting the other holders. This was impossible under Hindu law which stated that a man could not sell his property unless he had the consent of his sons or else could prove that it was necessary to sell it. Money-lenders thrived and many small land holders were ruined as pressure on land increased due to natural increase in population and to the reforms in the army and in the civil service.

The revenue collectors, appointed by the British gradually came to be regarded as owners of the land and the other cultivators as tenants, but all the same there were very few big landlords in the area, and many zamindars were poor and often impossible to distinguish from other cultivators. As a result of British intervention, however, land was now considered in terms of a market and a market economy, and this initial assumption then led to such dire consequences that they had to be remedied all through the 19th century and part of the 20th. Rights in land and land revenue were gradually brought under administrative control, but the individual ownership of land that had been introduced continued to exist, so there was no going back to traditional forms. The change consisted in bringing the dichotomous categories of tenants and owners closer to each other. A trend which culminated in the abolition of the

zamindars in 1952, when the State took title to the land.

This initiative was a result of both a policy of promoting agricultural development on a national scale as laid down in the Five Year Plan (1950-51 - 1955-56) and a desire for a more egalitarian structure of the rural community.

The development of land tenure and land revenue in Punjab and later in the part of Punjab that became the Union Territory of Delhi was very much the same as that in U.P.

Through the British a market economy was created. Here also the result was a dichotomization of cultivators into owners and tenants. Sale and mortgaging of land became common. Just as in the North-Western Provinces owners mortgaged their land to money-lenders in order to raise money to pay the revenue. (Census of India 1921:18)

Through the Punjab Tenancy Act of 1887 two major categories of tenants were recognized: occupancy and non-occupancy. The occupancy tenant was given the right to hold his land if he paid his rent without falling into arrears. The rent itself was to be fixed by the State Government. The Act did not provide for any security of tenure for the non-occupancy tenant. Economically the area was marked by an increasing pressure on land with rising prices and rents as high as 50% of the produce. The

money-lenders were as vigorous as they were in U.P. Thus it is said about a village not far from Delhi in the 1930s: "The Zemindar money-lender is no less exacting than his rival, the mahajan, and copies the latter's methods in every way as regards the rate of interest and recovery of loans by speedy appropriation of grain and fodder of the borrower at harvest time. He seems to be worse than the mahajan in that he encourages the borrower to borrow more than he can every hope to repay, and this forces the borrower ultimately to mortgage his land to him. Land hunger on the part of the zemindar is the chief motive in his loan transactions." (Narain 1932:102-103) As for the distribution of occupancy versus non-occupancy tenants it was estimated in 1959 (when the Act of 1954 was implemented) that about 68% of the land was being cultivated by non-occupancy tenants and it is estimated that before the partition of Punjab occupancy tenants cultivated only 7% of the area. (Sharma 1963:58-59). Thus it can be seen that the Act of 1887 gave protection to a very limited number of people.

In 1950 the Punjab Tenants (Security of Tenure) Act was passed. It was devised to protect tenants against unfair ejections which were expected to take place as a consequence of land reforms. The main reform came in 1954, when the Delhi Land

Reforms Act came into existence. It was not implemented until some years later, though. It created one class of land-tenure holder, bhumidhars, and one class of sub-tenure holders, asamis. And just as in U.P. the asami was to be a tenant on the State's land. Persons eligible for acquiring bhumidhari status were those who during the agricultural year immediately preceding the commencement of the Act occupied land under any form of tenancy or ownership, barring some exceptional cases, who would be asamis. The asami would hold his land from the Gaon Sabha (the area of jurisdiction for the administrative panchayat and treated as a body corporate). There were severe limitations on subletting, and there were also clauses dealing with evictions that had taken place in anticipation of the Act. All evictions on any other grounds than arrear of rent were declared void. The Gaon Sabha was given the power to take possession of land left by an asami without heirs, and it could also let out vacant land. Furthermore, it got certain rights with regard to common lands, etc. And just as in U.P. the Act provided for the setting up of agricultural co-operatives. As for the State zemindars being abolished, and who were mainly petty proprietors, they were to be adequately compensated.

Thus it is seen that the development taking place in what now is the Union Territory of Delhi were of the same kind as those taking place in U.P. The forms of land tenure that existed in the two areas were similar and the measures taken first by the British and then by the State Governments were more or less the same in both cases.

In this chapter the different institutions that are most important for shaping the Hindu social system have been outlined. They have been divided into the two categories, or extremes of a continuum, of offices, i.e., the positions within the social structure, on the one hand, and values, i.e., those concepts that operate on the minds of the people in the sense of "being in the heads of the actors", on the other. This "ethnographic and conceptual framework" has to be established and understood, because "perceptions of reality, social institutions, views of what is possible, and organizing concepts or units of thought form more or less integrated wholes and...the analyst cannot portray a particular situation or understand a range of problems... without constructing the social situations in which the particular people reason and act in terms of the units of thought of the people involved" (Neale 1969:6).

So, this chapter consists in a sense of the two aspects of material resources and symbolism of the institution of Hindu society.

It is Hindu society viewed from the outside. And this society has been influenced by other institutions, the Huns, the Muslims, the British. All these contacts have of course changed the institution of Hindu society and new things become tradition.

If one deals with the processes going on within the institution at a particular point of time one will find the actors shaped by it, but not in a uniform way since so many factors have been introduced from different directions. And the different offices and values described in this chapter (plus the new ideas that are constantly being brought in in a process of change) will act as the organisations mentioned in the first chapter in the competition between different actors.

The indigenous institution of caste as an ordering principle has been the centre of the exposition. In its two aspects of office and value it has been the main regulator of social behaviour in Hindu society. But it has developed and both as office and as value it has undergone changes. And this has been effected by different groups. The Brahmins and the Kshatriyas, forming an organization of material and symbolic resources against other castes in the society, fought between themselves

for absolute hegemony and the Brahmins allied themselves with conquerors and legitimized their conquest. This was probably facilitated through the fact that the Hindu religion was a very sophisticated one with written sources and therefore with a great capacity to compel. The Kshatriyas on the other hand redefined their position in terms of a new religion, Buddhism. But although it was against caste, it was never able to organize the Kshatriyas on any other basis. And, furthermore, with the depletion of the original Kshatriyas through war, some invading groups called themselves Kshatriyas and accepted the ritual dominance of the Brahmins.

At the local level, it seems to have been the British who brought about the greatest changes. Here administration becomes important since it is along this avenue that the new offices and values are disseminated. The administrative set-up furnish the avenues along which the institutions of the new dominant group can reach the local level. And at the same time these institutions affect the relations between the different groups in a village. For instance, the role of tax-collector instituted by the British meant that a man came to hold power in a way which was unknown in the traditional system, and before it had been incorporated into the ideology he held that post backed by the material

sanctions which could be activated by the British authorities.

In the same way the legislation in the field of land holding, the groups were severely affected both materially (individual ownership, market economy) and ideologically (land was not the business of the whole group any more, individual orientation).

And the courts contributed to changing the resources that people had had before.

The new resources that are introduced in a situation of change, work mainly as material resources before they are internalized and people have developed emotional attitudes towards them (cf. Firth 1951:248). This process of change goes on even today in India, but now the colonial values of the British have given way to a liberal-democratic ethic, that the new leaders are trying to get across to the people at the local level with their new ideology.

N O T E S

- 1 In town, on the other hand, it seems that inter-caste relations are much more relaxed and it is obvious that it is impossible to enforce caste restrictions on interaction between people in a situation where people do not know from what caste are the people they happen to meet in the street.
- 2 There seems to be a connection between this equality between the land holders and the characteristics of the society that this gives rise to and the pattern of caste ranking in the area. Thus, McKim Marriott writes: "Caste ranking in this area is not so elaborate as in many other parts of India... Rules of ritual pollution are mild or absent" (McKim Marriott 1965:53, 56) And, "While caste ranking in the Upper Ganges is simpler than in South India, it appears to be less vulnerable to disruption by changes in other parts of community structure" (59). McKim Marriott concludes: "Relations between caste ranking and other features of community structure in much of the Aryan-language speaking North India can be understood as variations upon this Upper Gangetic theme" (60).

- 3 This has been changed in the new Panchayati Raj set-up which emerged as the result of the propositions of the Metha committee. It suggested that the panchayats at the village level should be connected with a higher body at the block level, which in turn was under the authority of a district body. The panchayats would also be more directly connected with the CD programme. But since this development in the panchayat structure refers to a time after the case studies in the third chapter, it will not be dealt with here.
- 4 Zamindar, it should be remembered refers mostly to small owners and also to land-holders who did not come within the zamindar category. The British recorded the holdings and the body of owners was regarded as the middleman between the individual share-holder and the State. This was the origin of the creation of a class of "zamindars". "The Zamindar was usually a former tax farmer or revenue collector, and though originally the rights of the cultivators, i.e. security was sought to be recorded and safeguarded, in course of time the Zamindar came to have complete rights of ownership, including the right to terminate the tenancy of the cultivators" (Nanavati and Anjaria 1960:100).

CHAPTER THREE

This chapter will be concerned with the analysis of two case studies where the inter-relationship of the material and the symbolic variables will be investigated. The institutions outlined in the second chapter are available to the actors as resources and restraints.

The first case deals with two elections to a Gaon Panchayat in Saharanpur district in western U.P. The elections took place in 1949 and 1956. The study was carried out by Ralph Retzlaff and the name of the village is Khalapur. It has a population of over 5,000. There are 36 castes residing in the village. The main castes are: "rajput, landowning agriculturalists (42 per cent); chamār, landless agricultural labourers (12 per cent); brahman, priestly caste, though some are landowners (5.5 per cent); bhangī, sweepers (4.1 per cent); garariya, goat herders (3.8 per cent); bārhai, carpenters (3.6 per cent); kahār, water carriers (3 per cent); banyā merchants (3 per cent); teli, oil pressers (2.8 per cent); and jatiya chamār, cobblers (1.9 per cent) (Retzlaff 1962: 13,14).

The Rajputs are obviously the dominant caste in the village. They own about ninety per cent of the land. And most castes derive their livelihood from agriculture, at least they are

connected with land through the farmer-retainer system (jajmani). Territorially the village had been divided into seven boroughs (pattis) under the British. The Rajputs, or most of them, considered themselves to be descended from a common ancestor who acquired the village about four hundred years ago. The allegiances among the Rajputs start at the village level with the solidarity of the entire Rajput caste. Then come the lineage segments within each borough, and the lowest unit of solidarity is the joint farm family. The joint farm families are the effective building blocks in the system of alliances. There are also "domains" which are intermediate between joint farm families and boroughs. These domains do also cross borough lines. These domains constantly shift. The ideal norm of village alliances, however, as expressed by the Rajputs themselves, was couched in terms of boroughs. A and B boroughs were traditionally allies and C, D, and E used to help each other, possibly joined by F. and G.

After the passing of the U.P. Panchayat Act in 1947 elections to the panchayats were to be held. As already noted the election in Khalapur village took place in 1949.

The villagers learnt about the election from the local revenue officer, the patwari, officers from the Panchayat Raj Department and the Member of the State Legislative Assembly. The villagers seem to have understood that the post of pradhan would be important, since the main interest centred on it. There was considerably less interest in the question of how the Gaon Panchayat was to be constituted. The Rajputs, being only 41 per cent of the village population knew that they would lose if the other castes opposed them with a united front. And this is what began to happen. A non-Rajput, low caste party began to emerge. However, there were also Rajputs in this anti-Rajput party. The most important one being a Rajput from borough B

• "who had been the second sarpanch (president) and mukhiyā from 1929 to 1931 under the Panchayat Act of 1920" (55). This group had two candidates for the post of pradhan, a Brahman and a Baniya, which was known as the "labour" party. The Rajputs then decided to try to ally themselves with the Brahmins. They would still be in a minority but "in the popular understanding, a rajput-brahman alliance could not be beaten". The Rajputs decided on a Brahmin as candidate for the post of pradhan.

When it was clear that the Brahmins and the Rajputs were aligned, the Brahmins who had joined the non-Rajput party changed sides. When election day came some officials from the Panchayat Raj Department arrived in the village to be in charge of the election and there was a general meeting panchayat to decide on whom should be elected. The election itself was going to be by show of hands, which was a disadvantage to the low castes, since the Rajputs then could see who voted against them.

The Panchayat Raj Department officials told the villagers to give all castes a fair representation on the Gaon Panchayat.

A Rajput was called from each borough to suggest who would represent the Rajputs of that borough. A Baniya was then called to suggest the names for the other clean castes, and lastly the untouchables were allowed to propose their candidates.

The election that followed was unanimous.

Then it was time to elect the pradhan. The Rajput-Brahmin candidate was suggested and elected "without open dissent"

(57). The low castes were angry with the Brahmins because they blamed them for being responsible for the fact that the Rajput candidate had been chosen. Immediately after the election members of the non-Rajput party declared that they would boycott the

Brahmins. To put some pressure on the castes that took part in the boycott a fine of Rs 150 would be levied on the group that broke the boycott.

The Bhangis gave in first, pressurized by the Rajputs. Their services were essential to the village, and they were needed daily. The Rajput supporters of the new pradhan went around and promised and threatened the other striking castes to make them resume work. After some months a bullock belonging to a Brahmin died and the Jatiya Chamars were sent for to remove it. They refused. The bullock lay there for several days and then a group of Rajputs went to the Jatiya Chamars and on the one hand threatened to beat them up if they did not remove the dead animal and on the other, promised to pay any fee that might be levied if they complied. The Jatiya Chamars then removed the carcass, but they were not fined. Soon after that the other caste groups, too, went back to work, performing their services for the Brahmins. During this strike the Brahmins had, of course, refused to offer their services to the strikers.

The analysis of this case study will be carried out by the use of social situations and stages in the development of the case.

This will be done by using Turner's definition of society as a process punctuated with situations. To this will be added the fact implicit in Turner's statement, viz., that these situations must be qualitatively different due to the development of the events.

THE FIRST PHASE: It should first be noted that the villagers already to begin with sensed that the office of pradhan would be the important one. This was an opportunity for the different caste groups to dominate the village with an institution devised in an extra-village context to carry over the ideology of liberal democracy from the centre to the grass-root level.

The low castes saw an opportunity to gain influence helped by this modern institution. Their Weltanschauung had no doubt changed as a result of the propaganda from the state level propagating a modern India with equal opportunities for all.*

The low castes saw this as a means to achieve a more equal standing in the village. And they got, surprisingly enough, help from some Rajputs. These broke with the traditional ideology of caste solidarity, but it is difficult to say

*This was confirmed by the author, Professor Retzlaff in a personal communication.

whether they did this because they were poorer than the other Rajputs, since Retzlaff does not specifically mention this.

But one thing that would speak against this, is the fact that the Rajput from borough B who had been sarpanch and mukhiya between 1929 and 1931, joined them. Perhaps it was an instance of "modern" ideology at work, or perhaps it was only a traditional rivalry between some of the Rajput families and the other Rajputs. It is impossible to decide on the correct reason from a reading of the case study.

Anyway, as a result of the emergence of this non-Rajput party the Rajputs resorted to a traditional measure. Using the ideology of caste they joined forces with the Brahmins, knowing that although they were in a minority the emotional appeal of such an alliance would ensure their victory. Here the ritual status of the Brahmins (whatever their material wealth) went together with Rajput status, and, more important in this case, ownership of land. These were the traditional resources for controlling the village and they suit admirably the two variables of symbolism and material resources. The Rajputs selected a Brahmin as their candidate for the post of pradhan, no doubt because they felt

that his ritual status had more of an emotional appeal to the people than would a Rajput have. And it is to be noted that caste solidarity among the Brahmins was so strong that those who had at first sided with the low-caste party withdrew from it and joined the Brahmin-Rajput alliance. The pull from the caste was stronger than the gains they expected from, or the feelings they had for the non-Rajput party. This move by the Rajputs to get the Brahmins over to their side creates the second situation in the first phase, which continues until after the election, when the second phase begins.

The selection of pradhan and members to the Adalat and Gaon Panchayats were to take place in a traditional form, at a general meeting panchayat. And since the membership of the two panchayats was not considered to be very important it was soon settled. The selection of candidates was done, for the Rajputs, by a Rajput from each borough. The boroughs, then, in this case being the units of the village as they traditionally were regarded to be. Then a Baniya, a merchant, was to nominate the others. Here it can be seen how the important thing was to nominate the Rajputs according to the traditionally accepted territorial divisions of the village and after this having been

done, and the Rajputs by this procedure had been "ritually" acknowledged as leaders of the village, the turn came to the other clean castes, who, then, by being lumped together, were being "ritually" given an inferior position. And lastly the untouchables were, in the same way, "ritually" being assigned to the least important position and their apartness stressed. This case is obviously one, where the maintenance of caste and political importance based on caste, can be seen to take place even in the context of "modern", i.e. liberal-democratic institutions. The selection of the pradhan shows clearly how the supposed unanimity of the traditional panchayats were often the reflection of the will of the leading caste in the village. With the high castes being present, and although they were in a majority in the election situation, the lower castes did not dare to voice any opposition when the name of the Brahmin-Rajput candidate was proposed. Again the traditional values and sanctions proved their efficiency and he was seemingly unanimously elected. It is possible that the presence of the Panchayat Raj officials may have muffled open criticism of the Rajput candidate. It is conceivable that the villagers wanted

to show themselves from their best side in front of these officials.

This has been noted by Mathur, Narain and Singa in their study of Panchayati Raj in Rajasthan. In front of the officials the villagers "were content with playing a passive role...The attitude of the villagers at a gram sabha is a composite mixture of instinctive deference to authority and an intentional desire to please the powers-that-be" (Mathur, Narain, Singha and associates 1966:152,154). If this is so, then the officials, representing the "modern" system must have been deemed to be in a sort of alliance with the Rajputs from the villagers' point of view. Especially since these officials appeared in a setting traditionally dominated by the high castes.

The Rajputs were able to manipulate the whole election to their own advantage by (a) using the Brahmins and thus being able to draw upon the ritual status of this caste, (b) using the general meeting panchayat which they could control by virtue of their own power in the village and with the help of (c), (c) using, perhaps unknowingly, the presence of the representatives from the wider political system and the respect that these carried with them.

All this led up to a new phase in the development of the case:

THE SECOND PHASE: The Boycott staged by the non-Rajput party must be seen as a reaction against the Brahmins leaving the group to join the other Brahmins. The boycott was not directed against the Rajputs, however, although they were the ones who had initiated the alliance. This is probably an expression of the fact that the Rajputs were the political group in the village and that the Brahmins were one clean caste among the others and therefore could be expected to join either side. It is noticeable that the non-Rajput party did not seek confrontation with the Brahmins in the election. They chose to react by avoiding confrontation. The strike was a negation of relationship rather than an attempt at actively transforming it through a challenge. And among the castes who made up the non-Rajput party, the boycott was reinforced by a fine that would be imposed on the caste group that broke the boycott. This was a "material" device, should the "ideological" i.e., symbolical reasons, prove not to be strong enough. In the ultimate breaking of the boycott, however, the Rajputs were actively involved. A threat to the Brahmins was also a threat to them. It disrupted the normal functions of the village. The Rajputs used both their influence and the threat of physical punishment, the ultimate argument, should the "ideological" i.e., symbolical means be too weak. (1)

To sum up the first phase it could be said that the extra-village institution, the gaon panchayat, was seen as a way of gaining influence in the village by both the traditional leaders and the lower castes, traditionally without political or economic power. The latter were probably encouraged by the ideology of liberal democracy propagated by the independent Indian government. However, traditional considerations of caste values showed themselves to be too strong and the result was, in the end, that the Rajputs won having reinforced their group with the help of Brahmins who brought their ritual status as their main resource. And the caste loyalty of the Brahmins deprived the non-Rajputs completely of this ritual force. This plus the traditional setting, where the high castes are those who normally speak (the general meeting panchayat) completely stifled opposition (one could have expected at least the Rajputs in the non-Rajput party to protest, but for some reason, not mentioned by Retzlaff, they did not do so). The presence of the Panchayat Raj Department officials may also have had a discouraging effect on the non-Rajputs and stopped them from voicing opposition.

About the second phase it can be said that it was an attempt at revenge by the non-Rajputs on those who had spoilt their chances of success in the election. The ideological motive was strengthened by help of a fine on those who yielded. The Rajputs,

however, came to the help of their allies, using force, (material resources) where ritual status was threatened, as it were, and in the end they succeeded in ending the boycott. These two stages show in an interesting way how the ritual and the material resources complement one another: first the Rajputs using the Brahmins for their own ends and when the consequences of this make the Brahmins suffer the Rajputs use their material resources to help them.

This situation could obviously only come about when the landed caste and its natural allies, the Brahmins, were threatened as a whole by low caste opposition. This is a horizontal cleavage in Nicholas' terms (Nicholas 1968:248). It is also notable that the Brahmins seem to be rather passive in this election. They are, it seems being used by the different groups. Maybe this can be seen in the context of the traditional concept of priesthood as ideally divorced from worldly success. That this ideal did not always correspond to the reality is shown by Johnson in his study of the Chitpavan Brahmins. He shows how they were able to use their literacy to their advantage and gain materially, both before and under the British (Johnson 1970).

In the period following the election the corporateness of the Rajput group wore down when low-caste opposition had been successfully vanquished. The factions among the landed Rajputs

began to show themselves again. The horizontal cleavage gave way to a vertical cleavage (Nicholas 1968:248) which was based, among other things, on the farmer-retainer system.

The first Gaon Panchayat functioned until 1956 and bitter rivalries developed between different groups of Rajputs, some in favour of the pradhan, some against him. There were also persistent rumours of embezzlement of funds by the pradhan. The most important thing, however, was the establishment of the Land Management Committee that was to be under the Gaon Panchayat as a result of the abolition of zamindars. The committee could, among other things, sell land. The land of course being one of the main sources of disputes and factionalism among the landed members of society. Baljit Singh writes in connection with this: "The fact that private ownership of land lies at the root of the faction society is often missed in most of our deliberations on land reforms or planning of the country side" (Baljit Singh 1961:15), and "Factionalism is caused primarily by private land ownership and inequality in the distribution of land" (108). There was also the four dealings with the consolidation of land, giving this power to the Gaon Panchayat. Thus, the enhanced powers of the Gaon Panchayat made it a much more important institution in the village than

it had been in the first election. This plus the fact that the lower castes seemed to despair about their chances to wrest control of the Gaon Panchayat from the Rajputs contributed to a quite different picture of alliances in the second election that took place in 1956.

Before describing the election to the second Gaon Panchayat in 1956, some procedural niceties that came to be of a certain importance have to be explained.

The candidates to the Adalat and Gaon Panchayat as well as candidates for the post of pradhan had to obtain nomination papers from the Tahsil Headquarters. On a certain date the candidates would have to hand in their nomination papers with a Returning Officer who would collect them in Khalapur. The candidates could withdraw their nominations within the next ten days if they wished. "After that, an election was automatically scheduled for any post in which the number of candidates exceeded the number of seats available" (Retzlaff 1962:91,92). And, furthermore, when the deadline for nominations had passed, no new candidates could enter the race and the villagers were limited in their choice to those who had already entered. The important thing here is, as Retzlaff points out, that "the villagers did not become aware of these procedural limitations

until they had been overtaken by them" (92)

When the election to the second Gaon Panchayat was about to take place there was no strong demand, according to Retzlaff, "for a change in its (the village) past pattern of leadership, characterized by formal or informal rajput dominance" (90). The experiment with the Gaon Panchayat had not proved to be a successful one. The Rajputs in particular were determined to have a Rajput as pradhan this time. And the non-Rajputs, having their failure in the first election in fresh memory did not openly do anything to challenge the Rajputs.

As the election drew near the post of pradhan caught most of the interest as it had done in the first election. No-one openly announced his candidacy, but it became known that "at least one rajput from each of the boroughs was canvassing the village for support" (91). There was no mention of any Brahmin candidate and no-one from the other clean castes seemed to want to be elected either. But there was talk about an untouchable candidate.

The names of those who wanted to stand as candidates in the election became known to the villagers on the week prior to the filling of nomination papers. That day, i.e., the last day to enter the race was November 18th. On November 13th the Rajputs of B borough tried to call a general meeting panchayat

for the purpose of deciding "(1) on a candidate who would be supported for the post of pradhan, and (2) on a list of candidates for the gaon and adalat panchayats" (93). The idea behind this was that if there could be a village decision on these things then the other candidates would feel obliged to withdraw and an election be avoided. Most villagers felt that an election would be a bad thing. This panchayat was not held. Many leaders were absent, some purposefully. The Principal of the secondary school was also against the meeting. This man had become, during the time after the first election, the main link between the village and the outside world, i.e., the wider system. He belonged to the Congress party and had good connections with the people in the CD programme. And he had also become "an important figure in the politics of the Tahsil" (93). His school in the village was very successful and with the second election coming up he thought it was time for him to play a more important role in village affairs. Hitherto he was not involved in the factional splits in Khalapur. On November 15th another general meeting panchayat meeting was called. Of the forty people attending, 32 were Rajputs. No candidate came in person, but each had sent a representative. It was decided that a committee should be set up consisting of one Rajput from each borough, a Brahmin,

a Baniya and an untouchable. This committee should select an acceptable candidate for the post of pradhan. There was considerable discussion as to who should represent each group. Gopal Singh, a Rajput from borough A, sarpanch of the adalat panchayat, succeeded in nominating his own candidates to the committee. He was criticized and in the end the whole meeting ended in failure. Retzlaff mentions the fact that no-one mentioned that this was the last opportunity for adding new candidates to the list. After this they had to choose from those who had already entered. The only possibility to have another candidate would be for all candidates to step down.

The last day for withdrawal from the election was November 28th. On November 27th there was another attempt at compromising. Five Rajputs were candidates for the post of pradhan. One from each of the following boroughs: A, B, C, F and G. There was also a Chamar candidate from F borough. The Rajputs from A and C boroughs were standing only half heartedly, and the Chamar candidate was deemed to be without a chance. He would only attract a few untouchable votes.

At the general meeting panchayat on November 27th sixty-three persons were present. Of these forty-five were Rajputs. The other castes were somewhat better represented than they had been

before. But only one of the six candidates for the post of pradhan was present, viz., the Rajput from F borough. He was the only candidate, then, who could be bound by a decision. Some of the followers of two other candidates were keen on forcing an election and as soon as the meeting started they tried to sabotage it. Different Rajput groups refused to commit themselves to any certain compromise candidate, and people began to leave the meeting. Another meeting was then held on December 10th with about a hundred people taking part. Fourteen castes were represented from all boroughs. All main castes were represented. Four of the six candidates were present. Gopal Singh thought that an election would not be a bad thing. He was a supporter of one of the candidates who were absent. And he felt that their absence showed that they wanted an election. He was shouted down. Then he told the meeting that it was too late to nominate a compromise candidate. The only way of avoiding an election would be for all candidates to stand down. The four candidates and the main representatives of the two who were absent should deliberate among themselves and try to agree to support someone. This, of course, ended in complete failure.

In this context Retzlaff mentions how the wider system made itself felt in the village. The village had been divided into

four wards for the holding of the election. "An election would be held in each ward for candidates to the general membership of the gaon panchayat and, in addition, votes would be taken for each of the candidates for pradhan. Whereas the votes for pradhan would be added together from each of the four wards, the votes for general membership would be individual wards. In this way the ward was to be given a sense of political distinctness" (98). The village had already started talking in terms of wards and not in terms of boroughs when they discussed the election.

The meeting suggested then that two Rajputs from each ward should be chosen together with representatives for the other castes to form a committee. This proved to be impossible. Every Rajput that was brought forward was immediately challenged. Retzlaff then notes that political development moved on to a second phase when an election seemed unavoidable. This was the phase of alliance formation.

The forming of alliances were influenced by the fact that each voter had as many votes as there were candidates. Thus, every voter had six votes in the election of pradhan. Theoretically two candidates could form an alliance and tell their respective voters to vote for the other one as well and in that way defeat

a third candidate. The voting was to be by show of hands, just as it had been in the election to the first gaon panchayat.

And just as then, this was a disadvantage to the untouchables who were faced with pressure from the different Rajput groups to vote for them. The clean castes too, were subjected to pressure.

A meeting was held between rajput leaders of C,D,F and G boroughs on December 12. And prior to that there had been meetings between Rajputs of C,D and E boroughs and between Rajputs of F and G boroughs. "This attempt to unite these five boroughs against the candidates of A and B boroughs conformed to traditional village pattern of alliances" (101). They were not successful, however.

The candidate from G borough was mainly supported by Rajputs in C, D and E boroughs. In the panchayat of December 12 the F and G Rajputs were subjected to persuasion to support the G borough candidate. They refused. Then there was word that the Principal was trying to bring about a compromise. He was going to try to make all six candidates withdraw. The panchayat was adjourned until it was clear how successful the Principal was.

The Principal called the candidates and their main supporters and tried to persuade them to withdraw to avoid the disputes that would be the result of an election. He promised that a general

meeting panchayat would be held to decide on a compromise candidate. This attempt by the Principal was not very well received by the villagers, however, and they feared that he was trying to reinstate the old pradhan. On December 13 and 14 four of the candidates signed statements promising to withdraw. The two who refused were the Rajput from B borough and the Rajput from F borough. Both were strong opponents of the old pradhan.

"As it later developed, both these men were induced to run by a rajput from G borough who was openly antagonistic to the Principal. Both rajputs still contesting had sworn their loyalty to this man (Rup Singh of G borough), who at the time of the second elections was the largest landholder in the village" (102). This man had lost land because of the previous panchayat and he held the Principal and the old pradhan responsible for this.

"It further developed that the rajput candidate from G borough who was involved in a dispute with Rup Singh, was secretly supported by the Principal" (103).

The Principal then succeeded in persuading the Rajput from B borough to withdraw if the final candidate was selected from the six candidates. This was not possible, however, and the B borough Rajput refused to withdraw. After this turn of events the election was inevitable.

The Rajput panchayat that had been postponed while the Principal tried to work for a compromise, was never convened again.

For election purposes the village was, as has been described, divided into four wards. The North Ward consisted of A borough; the West Ward included G borough and part of F; the South Ward included the rest of F and the whole of B borough; the East Ward included C, D and E boroughs. "Each ward was allocated a set number of seats on the basis of its population...A fixed number of seats were reserved for members of the Scheduled Castes (untouchables)" (104).

There were going to be elections to the gaon panchayat in three of the four wards since the number of candidates exceeded the number of seats. In the South Ward, on the other hand, there were fewer candidates than seats.

While the elections to the gaon panchayat were held "influential members of the boroughs circulated among the voters seeking out the candidates, attempting to persuade certain of them to withdraw and thus avoid an election. In each instance it was successful. The issue was not so much the merits of the individual candidates, as it was the holding of an election" (107).

As for the election to the office of pnadhan, the C borough Rajput announced on the morning of the election day that he would withdraw. It seemed likely that he had withdrawn in favour of the G borough Rajput. The A borough Rajput also withdrew, explicitly telling his supporters to vote for the B borough candidate. Anyhow, their names were called and their supporters voted for them.

The East Ward seemed to be the most important one and the B borough Rajput felt that his "labour party" (he was the son of the B borough rajput who had supported the non-Rajput party in the election of 1949, and he, like his father pictured himself as the champion of low-caste interests) was strong in this area. In the election the low castes did not stand as united as they had done in the 1949 election. They had made attempts at presenting a united front, but had not succeeded. This time, the Rajputs, too, were divided and the low castes were caught up in this factional struggle, being approached by different Rajput groups. Since there were several Rajput candidates the lower castes were reluctant to put up a candidate of their own and directly oppose a Rajput. The Chamar candidate, however, ran in order to relieve the untouchables of Rajput pressure. The untouchables were the castes most susceptible to such pressure.

When they were approached by Rajputs they could say that they first had to support their own man, but would of course support the Rajput as well. This was very effective, since the Chamar finished second after the G borough Rajput, who was elected pradhan.

"From the results of the balloting it would seem that the non-rajput castes were not anxious to go against the dominant rajput group within their residential area with whom they had traditional farmer-retainer or other forms of contractual labour relationships" (111).

Retzlaff distinguishes several groups in the village that competed for the office of pradhan. First, there was the group headed by Gopal Singh, Rajput of A borough, sarpanch of the adalat panchayat and sarpanch of the old statutory panchayat 1939-41. Retzlaff terms him "charismatic". He is also well educated, but drinks a lot. His "support of the G borough rajput was based on a *quid pro quo* arrangement, for he had little personal attachment for this man prior to the election campaign" (112).

Then there was the Rup Singh group. He wanted to defeat the old pradhan, but did not run himself. Instead he asked the F and B borough Rajputs to run for him. He withdrew his support for

the latter when he agreed to the terms put forward by the Principal. The B borough Rajput did not receive a single vote in the West Ward as a result of this. The Principal headed the third group. He was at first interested in the re-election of the old pradhan, whom he would be able to control. When this proved impossible he persuaded the A borough Rajput to run, since this gave the Principal some bargaining power. And he did not commit himself to supporting the G borough Rajput openly, since he was not at all sure of this man's ability to win. There were also other groups who tried to influence the election. Most important among these was the group of Rajputs that had continued to support the old pradhan, but when it became clear that he would not have a chance of being re-elected they did not interfere in the electioneering to any greater extent. Some of them, those from B borough supported the B borough candidate. After the election there was a split between the pradhan-elect, the Rajput from G borough and his principal supporter, Gopal Singh, "over the continued distribution of gifts and favours" (113). The pradhan-elect became too independent of his supporters.

The effects of the election on the village community showed itself during shramdan week (when villagers do voluntary work for the general well-fare of the village). The year before this work had been relatively successful. This year separate projects were undertaken by different groups. The C, D and E boroughs started a project together under the lead of the Rajputs there. They worked on "improving a road leading to the sugar cane mill used principally by the rajputs of these boroughs"(115). The A borough Rajputs were occupied with "building up earthwork between the small stream which flows by the village and the road leading to their borough" (115). The F borough Rajputs, led by the unsuccessful Rajput candidate, "worked on improving the drainage on a road connecting their borough and G borough, but in the latter borough there were no projects undertaken at all. The F borough Chamars, led by the Chamar pradhan-candidate, dug "a drainage ditch to connect a stagnant pond adjacent to their quarters, to the drains which led to the stream flowing by the village" (115). "Each rajput group castigated the others for the failure to agree on a common projects, and was suspicious of the other's intentions" (115). Only the Chamar project compared favourably with the shramdan-week work of the previous year.

The divisive effects of the election had also repercussions outside the village. The Member of the State Legislative assembly who had been elected for the area, was very popular in Khalapur. He was a Congressman and the village was almost 100 per cent Congress. The pradhan-elect, the Rajput from B borough, had very close connections with the Congress party. And although the Congress had agreed with other parties not to interfere with elections to village panchayats, the villagers still felt that the Congress party had been involved and this feeling was strengthened by the fact that the Principal, too, as has been noted, was strongly pro-Congress and he had come to have the same enemies in the village as the pradhan-elect.

"The linkage was made by many villagers that to (oppose) the pradhan-elect and the Principal meant also to oppose the Congress" (117). When the election to the State Assembly drew near, and Independent candidate came to the village, sponsored at the meetings by the F borough candidate. Another matter that complicated things was the fact that "several of the defeated candidates, and their supporters, decided to appeal the election in an attempt to have the results invalidated and a new election held" (117). One of the first men to be approached was the Member of the State Assembly. He wrote them a letter in reply,

but gave no support. This strengthened suspicion that he was in collusion with the pradhan-elect. This feeling persisted although he disavowed any connection with the latter.

And in the election that followed Congress support in Khalapur dropped from nearly a hundred per cent down to less than sixty-six. The Congress man was defeated in the election by the Independent candidate. Clearly, the fact that Khalapur did not vote Congress did not mean that the incumbent Congress man was defeated only as a result of the divisions in the village. Also in the villages around in the area Congress lost votes, but Retzlaff argues that the result of the election in Khalapur must be seen as the result of the struggles for control over the village panchayat. Otherwise Congress support in Khalapur would not have dropped so sharply.

Retzlaff also analyses the result of the election with regard to village factionalism. "In most instances the old divisions and animosities that had existed for years were reinforced. In other instances changes, which can only be described as remarkable, occurred" (118). Thus, for example, the old enemies, the old pradhan and the F borough Rajput candidate, who had run just to see that the pradhan was not re-elected, started collaborating to oppose the pradhan-elect. "Similar

shifts in alignment took place between several groups which had formerly been in opposition to each other. By no means were the long-standing factional quarrels completely overcome; however, in some instances they had been bridged. If these strong antipathies can be overcome by an essentially 'negative' factor, one is led to wonder whether an appeal for unity, skillfully based on a 'positive' factor, might not be equally effective.

By a 'positive' factor I mean some appeal to action which would benefit both parties and the entire village as well" (118).

The analysis of the election to the second gaon panchayat will proceed in the same way as the analysis of the election to the first gaon panchayat. That is, the process will be divided into phases, which will be divided into situations when necessary.

THE FIRST PHASE: The units of the first phase are clearly the panchayats which were called to arrive at a compromise candidate for the post of pradhan. The first thing to note is the fact that there were five Rajputs and only one non-Rajput running. The reason for so many Rajputs running is clearly based on the fact that the different Rajput groups, not having a united low-caste group to fight and knowing that the gaon panchayat would be in charge of the supervision and selling of village land, had less interest in sticking together. The Rajputs that announced themselves as

candidates all came from different boroughs. This can of course be only a coincidence but it might be an example of the unity of the boroughs. Against this stands the fact that there were "domains" within each borough and between the different boroughs, and a result of this was that some families owed greater allegiance to families in other boroughs than they did to some families in their own borough.

In the panchayats that were called two trends are discernable; first, the growing attendance both of candidates and castes; and second, the growing willingness of some of the leading Rajputs to force an election. The first-called panchayat never materialized due to the absence of leaders. There is also mention of the Principal being against the holding of a general meeting panchayat, but it is debatable whether his word carried any weight since a general meeting panchayat was nevertheless called a couple of days later. The caste that was best represented at this panchayat was the Rajputs. This probably reflects the desire they had not to have an election in the village. And the absence of the candidates shows that they did not want to be bound by any decisions or be forced to take a stand before things were really sorted out. The membership of the committee chosen at this panchayat with a Rajput from each borough supports, to some

extent, the contention that the boroughs, despite decisive tendencies, were still strong enough to symbolize traditional patterns of organization and alliance. But then there was a discussion as to whom should actually represent the boroughs and this did not bring any conclusive result. This shows that the boroughs, although they were granted the status of units in the political life of the village, nevertheless had become obsolete enough to make it impossible, due to the forming of new alliances on other grounds, to use them in a more than symbolic way. The different families within them were not united enough to be ready to be represented by only one family head from the borough.

Gopal Singh's success in forcing his will on those present must be seen as the result of an individual using or being equipped with the traditional leadership characteristics: he belonged to the leading caste, a leading family, he was wealthy, he had been the head of the old statutory panchayat (an institution that probably was beginning to be counted as traditional). He also had the modern characteristics of a leader: he was the sarpanch of the adalat panchayat and he was well educated.

Both these things were confirmations of his standing in the traditional hierarchy as well as material platforms. In addition

to these social factors he had also a compelling personality.

Retzlaff terms him "charismatic". (2)

The panchayat following the first one was even better frequented with the increase being most marked among the non-Rajputs. But again the candidates were unwilling to attend. The interesting point here is the fact that there were some who tried to obstruct the meeting and press for an election. They thought that their respective group had a good chance of winning, but also because they could not see any compromise candidate who would be acceptable to them.

The general meeting panchayat following this, that is, the third meeting, represents a change of quality, and that is to say, a new situation. This panchayat was held after the deadline for a new candidate to enter the race and this meant that the villagers now would have to choose from the candidates who had already entered. Here an extra-village factor has entered the village scene and forces a change in actions on the part of the villagers. There has to be a conscious accommodation by the actors in order to cope with the new situation. The choice to make would, in this case, be to go on and have an election, or make all the candidates stand down and then, by this action, defeat the limiting impact of the externally imposed regulation.

This would have been a move from the local level that would have changed the on-going process in the wider system, viz., in the Panchayat Raj Department. The election would then probably have to be postponed (cf. Retzlaff p. 92). But there seem to have been very few who knew that the meeting was to be held under this limitation. Most of the villagers apparently still thought that they had time to agree on a compromise candidate.

With regard to the idea that an election should not be avoided, Gopal Singh's open argumentation for this showed that the idea was strong. When he then told the meeting that they had to make all candidates withdraw in order to agree on a compromise candidate who could be designated pradhan, the result was that a committee was to be formed along the same lines as the one that had been discussed in the first meeting. But in the meantime the village had been divided into four wards by an external decree in preparation for the election. Retzlaff mentions how this new State device is accepted by the villagers and that the committee that was to be appointed should be composed of representatives from the wards and not from the boroughs. This again shows that what has been said earlier about the divisive tendencies within the boroughs holds true. They were no longer units that played any important role in the village

affairs when the interests of different factions were at stake. Therefore this new regulation, coming from the outside system, could be accepted at once, since the village was implicitly ready for it, i.e., there was a potential basis for the wards which made them acceptable. The wards were not imposed in the sense that the villagers had any other big viable units that were suppressed. (It could obviously be argued that the wards did not follow domain lines either, and this is probably true, but the important thing in this context is the fact that domains never seem to have been the basis for any conscious or ideal division of the village. They were changing and not territorially fixed in the way the boroughs were. The domains were pragmatic and not symbolic divisions, as it were). The wards, however, had the same restrictions as the boroughs had. This showed itself in the fact that when the names of Rajput candidates were suggested it was impossible to reach an agreement as to whom should represent each ward on the committee.

To sum up this first phase it could be said that it consists of a series of situations, the general meeting panchayats, where there was an attempt to solve the problem of who should be the next pradhan of the gaon panchayat, a modern institution, by means of traditional methods by the leading group, the Rajputs.

The general meeting panchayats attracted more and more interest the more bitter the fight became and this is also expressed in the fact that certain groups did not want to avoid an election. Their willingness to break with the traditional method of decision making through unanimity must be seen as a result of the changes that had been brought about by the gaon panchayat and the results it had had in the village. These groups who wanted an election responded to a change in their Weltanschauung that had gone with their growing understanding of the institution of panchayat raj. But it was also a response to the factions in the village. The cleavages were so deep that they saw no way of reconciling the different opponents. In this case the post of pradhan has both a symbolic and a material aspect. The material consists in the division between the different factions and the importance of gaining control of the office of pradhan. The symbolic consists of the understanding of the fact that the pradhan is meant to be elected on an individual basis. Therefore two options were open to the contestants. They could either solve the problem in a traditional way or they could use a modern way of solving it. The institution itself being created in the wider system and imposed on the village allowed for this

and those who opted for an election had then the backing of the whole modern liberal-democratic system.

The State impinged on the election in two important ways; the deadline for adding new candidates to the list, and the creation of wards. The first one forced the villagers to change their course of action in accordance with this restriction on their possibilities of choosing. The second showed how little the traditional boroughs actually mattered. Their value was symbolic but actual alliances had out-fashioned them. However, the symbolic aspect was strong enough to make villagers refer to them, and try to use them, as units in the village political life. In this first phase of the case, then two different stages can be discerned, viz., the period before the deadline of entering new candidates and the period up to the end of the phase.

THE SECOND PHASE: In this phase it is the Rajputs who are still politically active. Retzlaff gives an example of "election mathematics" by noting the fact that if the Rajputs divided the votes between themselves and all the untouchables voted for the Chamar the latter would win. Therefore, it is not surprising that the untouchables, and also the artisans, were approached by the different Rajput groups.

The deliberations in this second phase took place between the different Rajput leaders and there were no general meeting panchayats. It seems that when a compromise still could be arrived at, the whole village had to be bound by the decision, in a traditional manner while in the second phase, when there was a contest between the Rajput groups, the hold of the Rajputs over the village really manifested itself. They did not have to unite against low-caste opposition; they could struggle amongst themselves and form alliances against each other, using the other castes as potential sources of support. The only threat would be the case where the Chamar candidate would attract enough votes from the lower castes to win. And one reason for the Rajput alliances was exactly this, but on the whole the threat was not so strong and the response from the Rajputs was in accordance with this. And the Chamar candidate was running, not to win in the first place, but in order to alleviate pressure from the Rajputs on the untouchables. There was also an attempt to revive the old village alliances between the different boroughs, but this turned out to be impossible, probably for reasons given above (and it is noticeable how split the boroughs were even within themselves.

The G borough candidate was not even supported by the Rajputs in his own borough).

The next situation in the second phase came when the Principal announced that he was making an attempt at reconciliation.

He was the outsider in the village. And he was the link with the outside world who hoped to become important in the village. His connections with Congress and his activities in the Tehsil Headquarters were all directed towards this. Using his capacity as an important person with connections with the wider system and his own status as a stranger in the village, who was not involved in any group conflicts, he wanted to mediate in this dispute and be seen as acting for the whole of the village (he was even prepared to let a general meeting panchayat make the final decision). This would mark a return to the status quo with regard to Rajput dominance and the use of traditional methods as a means of gaining influence over a modern institution brought about by contacts with that very modern system that had created the institution in the village. The Principal is basically the prototype of the modern leader in India. But his position did not only give him advantages. There was also the suspicion of him as being a stranger and therefore

many resented his interference. He had also some enemies, like the Rajput in G borough. In the end he fell on the fact that there were strong personal rivalries that not even he had been able to steer completely clear of. He was blamed by the Rajput of G borough, Rup Singh, for the latter's loss of land under the previous panchayat. Being an outsider with contacts in the wider system it was perhaps easy to identify him with the same authority that had created the gaon panchayat and which was the institution that had eventually brought about Rup Singh's loss of land.

The Principal was unsuccessful in his attempt and the end result was that he was inevitably involved in village politics and factional struggle.

Throughout this phase it is remarkable how completely the Rajputs dominate and how they are the ones that devise plans and form alliances. One should have expected the Chamar candidate to be a little bit more active under the protection of the modern system, i.e., to have electioneered more than he seems to have done. He had a chance of winning and becoming very important in village political life with the help of the modern institution, but tradition, both in the form of Rajput wealth and in caste ideology, seems to have been too strong.

The only non-traditional item in this election was the B borough Rajput candidate for the post of pradhan, who claimed that he headed a labour party and it is noticeable that he in this case used the image of his father who had been supporting the non-Rajput party in the 1949 election. The B borough Rajput of 1956 tried to appeal to the emotions that the low caste members probably still had with regard to the united front that they had been able to create in 1949 and which had been directed against Rajput dominance. And it seems clear that by appealing to the solidarity of the lower castes against the Rajputs he relied on support from whole categories of people in a way that the other candidates, save the Chamar, did not do.

Retzlaff gives, as has been seen, a description of the most important groups in this election. These groups show the composition that could be expected. There are two major groups led by Gopal Singh and Rup Singh respectively. They are all Rajputs and rely on their traditional sources of influence. The third group is headed by the Principal who uses other sources of influence. He is one of the non-traditional leaders: educated, coming from the outside with other aspirations than the "locals" in Frankenberg's terms (Frankenberg 1966:155), and, still

following Frankenberg, the Principal could be termed a "spiralist" (73). He builds his position through channels to the outside (and he is, in the first place, in the village sent there by institutions in the wider system) before he attempts to make an inroad into village politics, which are traditional, and only the modern institution of the gaon panchayat gives him this opportunity. He does not get involved in any factional struggle. His persuasion of A to stand for the post of pradhan should be seen, as Retzlaff points out, as an attempt to secure a means whereby he will be able to negotiate with the other groups in the case of a compromise.

The Principal, then, did not owe allegiance, in any traditional sense, to any group, but was manoeuvring to get himself into a position from where he could exercise a decisive influence.

This is the modern individualistic view of playing politics that is being introduced into village life and it stems from the wider system, and by its presence it widens the villagers'

Weltanschauung. The Principal tried by means of "bridge-actions" in Bailey's sense (Bailey 1960:248) to integrate the traditional and modern settings for his own political ends that were ultimately, no doubt, oriented towards the wider modern system.

He was, however, in the end overcome by the traditional pattern of village alliances and loyalties. In a sense he was too much ahead of the development towards a parliamentary democracy in the village to be successful. Then there was also the group of Rajputs supporting the old pradhan but it soon split up, when it became apparent that he had no chance of being re-elected.

In this context one can note the ease with which the candidates for the other seats on the gaon panchayat were persuaded to stand down. Obviously it had become clear, at least to the leading groups in the village, what power was inherent in the post of pradhan. But the smooth working of persuasion in the case of the other gaon panchayat candidates also shows the relatively small measure of "atomization" of the village community. The candidates were susceptible to pressure when the issue was not of such an overwhelming importance as that of selection a new pradhan. The candidates to the gaon panchayat felt that they could stand down and pay tribute to traditional values. The post of pradhan, on the other hand, allowed one person to assume a wide range of power in the village as an "individual" in the modern sense, while still playing his role in the traditional setting distributing favours to his followers and in general

acting in the interest of his allies. In this sense he would not be acting as the individual as outlined in the Panchayat Raj Act, but more as an influential member of the corporate group.

On election day there was a realignment along traditional alliance lines when the A borough candidate stepped down in favour of the B borough candidate and the C borough candidate withdrew, possibly in favour of the G borough candidate. This could be seen as an evidence of the old pattern of alliances between the different boroughs reasserting themselves, and doubtless it has got something to do with that. For sentimental reasons at least, the A borough candidate would probably rather see the B borough candidate win than anyone else and the C borough candidate withdrew and gave his supporters the option to vote for the G borough candidate. It is impossible to know exactly why, but it should be noted that both the A borough candidate and the C borough candidate had both entered the race only half-heartedly. Therefore, their decision to withdraw should perhaps be seen less as a revival of traditional alliances than a rightout statement of the fact that they were not interested any more.

To sum up the second phase: this phase can be divided into three situations. First the deliberations among the different Rajput leaders taking place in a traditional setting and with the aim to revive alliances partly to counter a large untouchable vote for the Chamar candidate, and to counter the moves of opponents within the Rajput caste itself. Here only village resources were involved, the prize being the control of an institution that had its origin in an extra-village context.

The second situation started with the attempt by the Principal to bring about a compromise. He brought in his extra-village resources, such as being active in the Congress and having a position in the Tehsil Headquarter as well as being an outsider (although he had one important Rajput against him) with a modern education. He also had a standing because of the success of his school. However, he was not able to settle the dispute, due to circumstances beyond his control, it seems, since Retzlaff says only "...the condition under which the other rajput, from B borough, had resigned could not in fact be enforced" (103).

The election became unavoidable and the readiness of the candidates for seats on the gaon panchayat to withdraw in order to avoid a contested election was a victory for the traditional values in the village at the same time as it was a recognition of the

relative unimportance attached to these positions as compared to that of the office of pradhan. And also the B borough candidate's attempt to revive the non-Rajput party of his father should be noted. He tried to rally the low castes around an issue that was basically non-caste, although the line went between the Rajputs and the rest, and as such would have become vital to the Rajputs as a caste and necessitated a more united stand on their part. With regard to the voting, which is the culmination of the earlier phases, and especially of the second phase, Retzlaff shows how traditional ties were used. The different Rajput factions used the ties of farmer-retainer to gain support from their dependants. These ties in traditional society, which were a result of the division of labour in that society, became important in seeking support against like groups in a political competition within the framework of the modern state as represented by the gaon panchayat to attain the aim of controlling the traditional resources and basis of wealth, i.e., the distribution of land. And in connection with this it is shown how the artisan castes voted with the Rajputs of their residential area. But there was also a sort of opposition from the weakest in the village as shown by the support that the Chamar candidate was given. He was given the votes of those who in a sense stood

outside society, the untouchables, and who presumably therefore had a sense of solidarity. They were also to a certain extent protected by the fact that they could in the first hand refer to caste solidarity when facing Rajput pressure. If Retzlaff is right in this, then the Chamar candidate wanted mainly to relieve the untouchables of Rajput pressure, but at the same time it gave them, as a result of this, an opportunity to voice their opposition while hiding behind the ideology of caste solidarity. The reason why the clean castes could not put up such a candidate is not discussed by Retzlaff but it might be due to the fact that they were clean castes and as such potential rivals of the Rajputs for hegemony in the village, especially with the resources of the modern set up, provided from the outside. This is especially true of the Baniyas who were a wealthy caste and apt to exploit new opportunities. If they had put up a candidate of their own, it would probably have been seen by the Rajputs as a direct challenge to their superior position in the village.

The election situation is different from the situations in the first phase and the first two situations in the second phase, since it was in a sense the point to which the previous situations had been building up; in the first phase through

attempts at avoiding it and in the second phase through the building of alliances and canvassing for support. The election, however, is a situation, not a phase. It marks the end of one phase and the beginning of another.

THE THIRD PHASE: this starts after the election. It deals with the situation directly brought about by the election.

Retzlaff mentions three divisive results in village life which are the direct consequences of the holding of the election:

- (a) the effects on shramdan
- (b) the effect of the village panchayat election on the General Elections held in the village, and
- (c) the effect on village factions. (114).

The shramdan work was unsuccessful and carried on a borough basis. To a certain extent the old alliances between some of the boroughs can be seen here. But the manifestation was rather weak, only C, D and E worked together while F, for instance, undertook two projects, each led by an unsuccessful candidate for the post of pradhan. And G borough did not undertake any work at all, and A and B did not work together. It seems that the attempt at reviving the boroughs may not have been an attempt at all, it may be that it was only a response to a

habitualized way of behaving. And if the boroughs were declining as bases for village politics, it seems likely that the struggle between the alliances in the context of election to the gaon panchayat must have weakened the solidarity within and between the boroughs even more. This is where one would have liked to know to what extent the alliances built up conformed to previous alliances between the joint farm families in the domains.

Unfortunately, Retzlaff does not analyze this.

Of even greater importance was the effect that the village election to the gaon panchayat had on the general elections.

Here one can see how the local level reacts back upon the wider system in response to intrusions from the outside. Prior to the election there was an amicable relationship between the Member of the Legislative Assembly and Khalapur village, which had supported him almost unanimously and he had responded in the give and take way that is the basis of a patron-client relationship. He belonged to Congress and Congress was the strongest party in the village. It seems clear that in the election when the incumbent MLA was defeated the villagers acted partly in response to the new situation created by the gaon panchayat

election. The Principal who had used Congress and the modern set-up in general to become a leader in the village, not a group based leader, but an individualistic, modern all-village leader, became involved in the traditional group fighting and when the pradhan-elect also turned out to be identified with Congress the opponents of these two immediately drew the conclusion that the latter had been elected with the help of Congress. Thus, the Principal was defeated by the traditional group loyalties and his personal defeat as a future leader in the village was linked to the success of the traditional group leader and these two facts then reacted back on the incumbent MLA, the benefactor of the village, and contributed to weaken the strength of Congress in the constituency. This, in turn, it could be argued, would make Congress reform its approach and thus react back on the local level in response to the setback. This is just a hypothetical guess, but the trend is clear; the traditional system reacts back on the modern system and the reaction has implications in the extra-village context, just as reactions from the wider system has implications for the local level.

The changes that occurred in village factionalism must be seen as even more wiping out the old loyalties that had existed. The panchayat election created a new situation here also, which the villagers or, in this case, the leading groups, had to come to grips with. The pradhan - elect was such a threat to his enemies that old opponents united to fight him. This shows the impact the new institution of panchayat raj had on the Rajput groups. It led to a pattern of alliances that were similar to alliances between political parties. Obviously, factions had been present in the earlier history of the village, but the gaon panchayat, the powers it gave to the group that controlled it and the pattern of electing the pradhan all contributed to create a situation where "longstanding factional quarrels" (118) were to a great extent overcome. Retzlaff notes this and goes on to argue that if factions could be overcome by such an essentially "negative" factor, then there could be the same result from a "positive" factor. What he fails to realize is that the power in the village would still rest with the Rajputs as a caste and it would be based on the same material and symbolic resources as in the traditional society, with the extra addition of the modern gaon panchayat which would provide mainly, to start

with, a material advantage. But what is more important is the fact that Retzlaff talks about two different things when he speaks about "negative" and "positive" factors. In the "positive" case the village would stand united, in the "negative" case, however, new factions are substituted for old ones. What this latter case shows is only the fact that the institution of gaon panchayat was such a coveted prize that the Rajput groups which had been defeated in the election reunited along different lines to offset the effects of their defeat. The gaon panchayat, an extra-village institution, gave things this new turn and the only thing that happened was that the same units that had previously made up the different Rajput factions, rearranged in order to ally themselves with or wrest control from the victorious group. This is not a striving towards unity, it is just a conscious choice of how best to organize ones political resources with the traditional and modern means that one has at ones disposal with regard to a well-defined goal, the office of pradhan of the gaon panchayat.

To sum up the third phase, it can be said that the election brought about a new stage from which new alignments had to be made, if the groups that lost the election would have any possibility of countering the successful group. In order to

do this they had to overcome some of the old splits and form new alliances. The election did not have repercussions only at the local level but affected also, or contributed to effect, the composition of the Legislative Assembly and the Government of U.P. The very authorities that had implemented the gaon panchayat were able to feel the consequences that it had led to in the village.

THE SUMMING UP OF THE FIRST AND SECOND ELECTIONS: In both the elections material resources and symbolism were used with regard to the different institutions that were activated by the actors. In the first gaon panchayat election the two variables of material resources and symbolism can be seen to be explicitly used, the situation itself being created in the extra-village system, the action being the result of a conscious idea of how the country should be run at the local level together with the power to implement this idea. In Khalapur village the materialization of this idea, the gaon panchayat, became the reason for certain actions to be undertaken by the traditional leaders and by those who supposedly stood to gain most from the introduction of the new device, i.e., the non-landowning castes. The case study is most explicit with regard to the Rajput manoeuvring and it can be seen how they solved the problem of getting their man

elected. They buttressed their own power with the ritual power of the Brahmins and they stood together as a group when faced with the non-Rajputs, except for some who joined the non-Rajputs. They finally made the decisive move in a traditional context, the general meeting panchayat, where only the high castes were supposed to speak. The whole affair of selecting a pradhan was an internal affair, with connexions with the wider system only through the gaon panchayat itself and the Panchayat Raj officials who were present at the meeting. The boycott that followed was also settled wholly within the traditional frame of reference. Here the roles of the Brahmins and the Rajputs were, in a sense, reversed. Now it was the Rajputs, who mainly because of their material power came to the help of the group that had the ritual power but mainly lacked the material resources.

With regard to the institutions used it is obvious that they provided the Rajputs with the most advantages and to a great extent acted as restraints on the lower castes. But this is only something that could be expected since the institutions used were traditional and as such compatible with the high-caste dominance.

The election to the second gaon panchayat proved to be quite different. The united low-caste opposition from the first

panchayat election had disintegrated and the cleavages were now vertical instead of horizontal. The situation was that of different Rajput groupings opposing each other in the contest for the pradhanship that had proved to be so powerful. The Rajput factions used what ties they had to the lower castes, such as farmer-retainer relationships, to gain support. Because of this the struggle for the office of pradhan of the gaon panchayat took a different form from what it had done seven years ago. To begin with it could be noted that there were attempts at settling the whole thing by means of traditional institutions. The Rajputs wanted to hold general meeting panchayats that would decide on the question, i.e., they wanted to use the same forum that had proved to be so useful before. But since the cleavage now was vertical and not horizontal there was not the same urge to find a compromise candidate. The lower castes did not pose any immediate threat, a fact that probably contributed to widen the divisions within the Rajput caste. These general meeting panchayats did not accomplish anything and the different Rajput groups obstructed each other all the time. Then again the extra-village system impinged on the proceedings in the shape of the statutes for adding new candidates to the list. The deadline forced the villagers to

change their plans, and in the next phase the Principal, himself an outsider and equipped with his connections to the wider system stepped in and made an attempt at solving the problem in the traditional way by promising a general meeting panchayat if the candidates withdrew and thus a situation was created that would have forced the Panchayat Raj Department to take some form of action. The Principal's attempt was thus an attempt at solving a problem in a traditional way, where traditional methods had failed, by an outsider who derived his position entirely from modern institutions. It seems that he used the modern institutions he had behind him in a material sense, i.e., as giving him a platform to operate from, and he had doubtless also a modern ideology, but in order to be successful he had to manipulate traditional institutions in accordance with traditional values. The modern institutions gave him the platform but they did not legitimize his effort and he consequently failed.

After the elections the struggle went on; in a way this is similar to what happened after the first election. Then the Rajputs relaxed after having overcome the threat from the non-Rajputs and began to form alliances. After the election to the second gaon panchayat the Rajputs continued to be divided, but the divisions changed and new alliances developed. And

these alliances used the wider system in their struggle and reacted back on that system. The traditional system having, as was thought, been manipulated by the Congress party, reacted back and contributed to a change in that system. This is very different from the first election to the gaon panchayat when the wider political system was not involved in the factional struggle (except of course for the institution of gaon panchayat, which was the very reason for fighting). This is a notable change that is likely to draw the village political life increasingly into the context of Indian party politics in general. In this way the gaon panchayat seems to have opened the way for something that was not intended in the Panchayat Raj Act.

The setting of the other case study which will be analyzed is a village near Delhi. The author, Gangrade, compares two elections to the village statutory panchayat established by the Delhi Panchayat Act of 1954. The first election took place in 1959 and the second in 1963.

The Jats are the dominant caste in this village. They own 94 per cent of the land, the other 6 per cent being owned by Baniyas 4 per cent and Brahmins 2 per cent. There are 45 Jat households in the village, ~~43~~, 18 per cent of the population, divided into two gotras, one, the Serawat gotra consisting of

43 households and claiming that their ancestors founded the village; the other gotra, Doggar, consists of 2 households.

The Serawat gotra is divided into two pannas, Gopal Singh and Ganpat Singh, stemming from two sons of one of the ancestors.

Next in numerical strength are the Chamars, 16, 18 per cent of the population, 19 households. They are divided into two groups, and claim to have been in the village as long as the Jats.

They have given up leather work and are now tailors. About 19 Jats work in the city. There are four Jat graduates.

The Baniyas have 3 households. They do not function as a group. Some of the Baniyas live in the city.

There are 5 Brahmins households who function as a group. Then there are the Dhobis, who are Muslim, and not very active in village affairs.

The Bhangis, Kumhars, Lohars, Sunars, Nais and Chipis make up the rest of the village community. Of these the Bhangis and the Kumhars have stopped operating within the village economy and have consequently no patron-client relationship with any of the other groups. The Bhangis are scavengers in the city and the Kumhars transport earth or bricks.

The panchayat election was going to include selections to the circle panchayat, two members, one pradhan for the village

panchayat and six member of the village panchayat.

There seems to have been little interest in the election to start with, "but the pressure from the panchayat office increased as the date of the election drew nearer" (Gangrade 1966:146).

The villagers knew also that the panchayat would be vested with the right to sell and distribute waste land.

There were a few Jats who thought they should file nomination papers for the post of pradhan. There was Chandan Singh who headed a Jat group in the village. He had rather bad relations with most of the other groups. He was the former lambardar and had extracted money from the low castes. But he was on good terms with one of the Baniyas, Hari Ram Baniya, who owns the shop in the village. Chandan Singh also represents the village on the caste panchayat. But there was already a Jat who had filed for contesting the election of pradhan. His name was Nanak Singh, who was the head of another Jat group which had the support of the Brahmin group, since its head was a member of Nanak Singh's card-playing group. The group has also connections with one of the Baniyas, Daya Ram Baniya, who is a teacher. "The Lohars, due to their territorial ties with this group, generally support members of the Nanak Singh group" (144). Nanak Singh is also regarded as the leader for the other subgroups of Jats in his panna.

Chandan Singh, not being sure that he would win, and afraid that the office of pradhan would be lost to some other caste altogether, if they had more than one Jat candidate, decided to try and compromise with Nanak Singh. He approached a Jat leader with whom he had good relations, Charan Singh, and asked him to tell Nanak Singh to come to a meeting at the house of Ishwar Singh, the cousin of Charan Singh, who was on good terms with both Chandan Singh and Nanak Singh. Furthermore, Ishwar Singh's house was on the border of the two pannas.

But then things were complicated by the fact that Hari Ram Baniya, with the support of one of the Chamar groups, the Bhagwan Chamar group, declared that he would run for the office of pradhan.

The Chamars did away with their internal divisions and nominated Bhagwan as a candidate for the circle panchayat and Mamchand, the leader of the other group, the Mitthan group as a candidate for the panchayat.

"The Chamars had to reconcile themselves to a person of a high caste as Pradhan as their own status was low even when they had left their traditional calling of leather-work" (146).

All this made the Jats change their policy. They decided that they had to face the Chamar challenge. And to do this they had to unite. Nanak Singh, who had a modern education agreed to

withdraw from the race and instead he accepted to be nominated for a seat on the circle panchayat. Then there was the problem of finding a Jat candidate to stand against Hari Ram. Most Jats felt that it would be below their dignity to fight for the chairmanship of the panchayat, when they were the traditional leaders of the village, and their ritual position was second only to that of the Brahmins' and equal to the Baniyas'. Then Chandan Singh suggested that they should put up a Baniya candidate. He suggested Narain, who was the nephew of the heads of the two other Baniya households. He was poor, but known to be honest. Narain accepted the nomination, but when his brothers heard of it they told him not to stand against his uncle. And as a result of this he withdrew. The Jats were then approached by Daya Ram who complained that Hari Ram "had drawn a wall opposite his house which had blocked the entrance to the street" (148). He wanted the traditional village panchayat to be called to settle the case. The Jats were not interested and told him to go to court with his problem. He accepted but also offered his adopted son, Krishna Chander, as Jat candidate for the office of pradhan and filed the nomination papers for him. The Jats were not convinced about Krishna Chander's ability, however, and decided to put up someone from their own caste, Ishwar Singh

suggested Charan Singh in order to consolidate the Jats. He reluctantly agreed.

"To further strengthen his chances, Chandan Singh invoked the age-old custom of taking an oath at midnight on the boundary of a well wherein a pot containing salt water was to be buried, to remind the members of the Jat caste that if then did not cast their vote in favour of Charan Singh a curse would fall on them and their family or lineage would also be buried as the pot.

"This was accepted by all the Jat leaders and on the appointed day they assembled in the field and took the oath". (148,149).

Charan Singh then told the Chamars of the Mitthan group that if they supported him, he would make their leader the vice-pradhan. In the end, having in vain tried to make the Baniyas put up only one candidate, they decided to vote for Charan Singh.

In the election the six seats of the panchayat were filled without being contested. All major Jat groups were represented as well as the Brahmins.

The pradhanship went to Charan Singh followed by Krishna Chander and Hari Ram, in that order. "Thus the Jats were able to retain their dominance in the statutory panchayat" (149).

When the panchayat began to function most villagers were happy that Charan Singh was the pradhan, but later there were rumours about manipulations in connection with distribution of common land. The Jats felt that he gave more to his kinsmen and other members of his panna. And the Baniyas were dissatisfied because they were given less land than they had before. The Chamars got bad sites for building houses. An official complaint was made and "higher authorities" decided that there would be no further land distribution until there had been an investigation. In 1963 it was time for a new election to the village panchayat. By this time Charan Singh had lost much of his earlier standing in the eyes of the villagers. There was a general meeting panchayat called, presided over by a Jat from a neighbouring village, to try to find a candidate acceptable to all. The Jat who presided was called in order to "judge the issues impartially" (150). Dev Singh was selected. He came from the Ganpant Singh panna, and known to be honest. However, he asked to be excused for not being able to accept. The villagers then asked him to name anyone and they would accept the candidate so appointed for the post of pradhan. He chose Charan Singh. Charan Singh retained all the members of the panchayat with the exception of Hari Ram Bania who was included to replace one member who had died.

Nanak Singh withdrew from the circle panchayat and named a candidate to replace him. This was accepted.

All this made the villagers think that the election would go very smoothly, but then Nanak Singh announced that he would contest the election to the pradhanship, "contrary to the wishes of the whole village" (151).

Obviously many felt that Charan Singh should have withdrawn from the pradhanship and not tried to be renominated due to the troubles over land distribution under the earlier panchayat.

And so many villagers "decided to sponsor Nanak Singh much against the wishes of Devi Singh whose choice had fallen on Charan Singh. Devi Singh's choice, according to these villagers, fell on Charan Singh in order to prove his non-partisan attitude. He did not select Charan Singh because the latter was agnatically related and had territorial ties with him" (152).

Thus the election became a fight between the Jats. Charan Singh was favoured by all the Jats of his panna except for one family the head of which had been appointed to the circle panchayat replacing Nanak Singh. He also got the support of the Dhobis, Bangis and the Chamar group of Mitthan. The Dhobis and Bhangis seem to have voted for him because he had given them good sites for building houses while he was pradhan. And the Mitthan group

had to reciprocate, since he had made the head of that group vice-president of the panchayat. Nanak Singh was supported by the Brahmins, Daya Ram Bania's family, the Bhagwan Chamar group and some others. Gangrade does not know why these groups supported Nanak Singh.

Charan Singh won the election by five votes.

As a result of the contest the village was split and "developmental activities received a setback. The 1963 election also showed a break in the traditional norm of the village. Charan Singh, contrary to expectation, became attached to power.

Nanak Singh also did not adhere to the traditional practice of accepting the verdict of the villagers" (152,153).

ANALYSIS OF THE FIRST ELECTION:

There is first to be noted the fact that the different Jat groups were potentially in opposition to each other. Thus, Chandan Singh, who wanted to become pradhan, but at the same time did not want to risk to split the Jats and give the office of pradhan away to some other caste, had to deliberate with the other Jat candidate, and this could be done only through the mediation of a third Jat leader, who was on good terms with both Jat candidates. Here the importance of the territorial divisions manifested themselves, since the place where they were to meet

was on the boundary between the two pannas. It is obviously impossible to draw any definite conclusions about the role of the pannas in daily politics from this statement alone, but it is worth noting.

The fact that the Jats had to be careful not to split and lose control over the panchayat was due to the fact that there was a diversified economy in the village, with quite a few villagers working in Delhi and also some people with a certain education. This means that the village was not completely dependent on agriculture and with this changed ecology went the diminishing importance of the Jats. Another fact seems to have been the fact that the office of lambardar had been abolished and since this had been a Jat controlled institution, the result had been that they had lost some control. But again, this must be seen together with the opportunities of work that the villagers had outside the village. Ecologically the situation was more favourable to the lower castes than it would have been, had the village economy still been completely based upon agriculture. On the other hand, the Jats were still strong enough to successfully counter any threat to their hegemony if they stood united. The first situation in the first phase in the first election to the village statutory panchayat is characterized by different

groups putting forward their candidates. Thus, there were, as already mentioned, Chandan Singh and Nanak Singh from the Jat caste and Hari Ram Bania and the Chamars also put a candidate for the circle panchayat and one for a seat on the village panchayat. This created the second situation when the Jats understood that they had to do something in order to counter the threat posed by the Baniya candidate. Here it is notable that the Jats had difficulties in finding someone who wanted to stand against a Baniya. They thought it below their ritual status to do so, although their ritual status was the same as that of the Baniyas, but obviously the fact that they were the dominant caste in the village gave them in their own eyes at least a status higher than that of the Baniyas. And to stand would in a way be the same as admitting that the Baniyas could challenge them and thus be a denial of the absolute supremacy of the Jats. The possibilities of the other castes to threaten the Jats forced them to throw up a candidate of their own. At the same time it can be seen how ritual status was necessary if a person wanted to be a candidate for the post of pradhan. The Chamars could not have one from their own caste standing, but had to go by way of a member of a high-ranking caste, Hari Ram Bania. The Chamars were numerous enough to give a candidate a substantial

backing if they united but they had to have a candidate of high ritual standing otherwise they would not stand a chance. And with the Jats it was the other way round. They had also the manpower, but they felt it degrading to contest an election against someone from another caste in view of their traditional dominance of the village. Therefore, they decided to select a Baniya to run on their behalf.

The fact that the Baniyas could be used in this way must have been due to the fact that they were a caste with different occupations and they had, as Gangrade points out, no group feeling. However, the pressure on the Baniya who had accepted to stand for the Jats became so great that he had to withdraw. But as soon as one Baniya disappeared there was another volunteering because of troubles within the Baniya caste. The Jats, however, finally decided to support someone from their own caste and they chose Charan Singh, the man who had formerly been requested to act as a mediator between the two original Jat candidates, and he seems to have generally good connections with most people. He was the ideal candidate to take care of the interests of the Jats.

Charan Singh strengthened his position by both ritual and material means. He had all Jats to take an oath that they would

vote for him in the election and in this he adhered to Jat tradition. But he also used the material variable by asking the Chamar Mitthan group to vote for him and then he would make their leader vice-president of the statutory panchayat. This divided the Chamars with one group voting for the Baniya candidate and one for the Jat candidate. The Brahmins are notable for their seeming absence from this politicking. Gangrade gives no reason, but they seem not to have made any political moves on their own. Neither seem to have had any influence in winning support for any of the candidates. In the election itself there was the traditional consensus as far as the relatively unimportant places on the village panchayat were concerned.

This election took place wholly within the village realm. The only intrusions from outside came in the form of the statutory panchayat itself and pressure from the panchayat office that there should be more interest in the election from the village side. The village does not seem to have made any contacts with anyone from the outside with regard to the coming election.

To sum this one-phased run-up to the election it is to be noted that the diversified economy of the village made the dominant

caste less dominant than it would have been had the village depended entirely on agriculture.

Ritual status was very important, not in the same way as in the first case study where the Rajputs ensured victory with the help of the Brahmins. In this case the Jats thought that their traditional dominance of the village gave them a status superior to the Baniyas, who, however, were as clean a caste as the Jats. And, furthermore, the Chamars, who were numerous enough to pose a threat to the Jats, had not the necessary ritual status to put up a candidate of their own and had to rely on a Baniya. The Baniyas being accessible both by the Jats and the Chamars, due to the fact that they had no group feeling, which, in turn, was probably due to the fact that they had no occupation common to them all, and thus had no way of asserting their corporateness. The Jats, once they were united behind a compromise candidate, used both ritual or symbolic and material means to ensure their victory. There was the taking of the oath and the transactional device of offering the vice-presidentship of the village panchayat in return for votes.

ANALYSIS OF THE SECOND ELECTION:

In the second election that took place in 1963, Gangrade writes that the villagers (probably a euphemism for the Jats) seemed

determined to have a candidate who would be supported by the whole community. Charan Singh's manipulations with regard to land distribution had made the villagers unwilling to have him as pradhan for another period. Thus, it can be seen that it is the very economic basis, or the most important part of the economic basis, land holding that tempts the misuse of the modern institutions for traditional goals (ownership of land).

The question of choosing a new pradhan was to be settled at a general meeting panchayat, which was a traditional way of settling disputes, and as noted earlier, gave an advantage to the higher castes. The dominance of the Jats was marked by the fact that the person presiding at the meeting was a Jat from outside. He represented both impartiality and Jat dominance. The traditional value of compromise showed itself when the Jat selected by the villagers could not in fact accept the position of pradhan and he was told to nominate anyone he wanted, who would then be unanimously endorsed. He chose Charan Singh, the previous pradhan, and if Gangrade is correct, unanimity, this traditional value, was carried to the extreme, when he was seemingly unanimously endorsed by the very same people who before did not want him for a second period.

However, Nanak Singh was obviously one who thought that this would not be all right and he decided to run, too.

It would seem from Gangrade's description that many of the villagers who had endorsed Charan Singh when he was chosen by Dev Singh in the general meeting panchayat later reconsidered their decision and decided to support Nanak Singh. This would seem to suggest that the traditional power of the general meeting panchayat was strong enough to make people take decisions that they later regretted. But this must be cautioned, since the data is scanty. One reason for endorsing Charan Singh for a second period as pradhan may have been partly due to the fact that he had formerly been on good terms with most people and that this still was remembered by the villagers and made them more susceptible to the influence from the general meeting panchayat.

But, curiously enough, the villagers thought that Nanak Singh had acted wrongly not to abide by the decision taken at the general meeting panchayat, although so many voted for him in the actual election. The fact that he could go against the general meeting panchayat decision shows the impact that the statutory panchayat had had on the village, since he could act as an individual and still hope to be successful.

The question remains, however, why the other castes stood by the decision of the general meeting panchayat when it became clear that the Jats would have two candidates. This would have been a golden opportunity for them to fight the Jats and perhaps win. And since so many people worked outside the village and were independent of the Jats it could be expected that the decision of a traditional panchayat would carry less weight than it would have done, had the economy and the Weltanschauung been more traditional. These are all legitimate questions, but unfortunately there are no answers to them in the case study and they have to remain unanswered.

The second election to the statutory panchayat can be summed up by saying that there seems to have been a strong force inherent in the traditional panchayat, but that many villagers changed their minds once they were faced by another option brought about indirectly by the modern institution of statutory panchayat, it would seem, viz., Nanak Singh's decision to oppose Charan Singh. But the question remains why other castes did not follow suit.

THE SUMMING UP OF THE FIRST AND SECOND ELECTIONS:

Due to the diversified economy and the more outward-looking attitude brought about by some villagers working outside the

village in a modern setting, the dominant caste, here the Jats, meet with difficulties in asserting their superiority.

The first election showed how the Jats had to forget their splits and change a situation of vertical divisions into one of horizontal divisions. The ritual status showed its importance in the fact that it was difficult to find a Jat who was willing to stand against a Baniya who had been selected by the Chamars, who, in turn, lacked the ritual status that was necessary for a candidate to have. Both parties took advantage of the lack of group feeling that characterized the Baniya caste. Later, however, the Jats decided to put up a candidate of their own and their determination to win was ritually expressed by the taking of an oath as well as a quid pro quo arrangement with one of the Chamar groups.

The wider political system impinged only marginally and the whole affair of nominating candidates for the post of pradhan, was done in traditional terms, except for the actual voting which was individual.

In the second election the Jats split and the low castes seemed, for some reason, not to be willing to fight the Jats this time. Again, the election was contested within the realm of tradition,

although a Jat showed an individualistic orientation by going against the general meeting panchayat decision.

In both elections the prize was a modern institution that would be in charge of the distribution of land, and in this sense the wider system impinged by giving a group the power of this institution in their struggle against other groups in the village over the main source of wealth, land. Again, the institution was devised to act in a modern manner, that is to say, everyone would have one vote and people would act as individuals, not as members of groups. But since the conditions of rural India are what they are, this proved to be impossible and the statutory panchayat became another institution in the factional and, to some extent, the inter-caste struggle, with the Jats being able to use it as a resource, having won the prize by the use of traditional methods.

This chapter has been about the use of different institutions by different actors. In all cases it has been seen how the traditional groups have been able to retain their dominance when facing challenged that have originated in a new and more modern system. They have been able to manipulate the very institutions that were designed to favour economic growth and democracy in the rural area. And they were able to manipulate

the institution with the help of traditional institutions, using both their symbolic and material aspects as organisations. Here only a few points shall be made. It can be seen how in the election to the first gaon panchayat in Khalapur, the dominant caste used the ritual power of the Brahmins to forge an invincible alliance. In all the other three examples given (the second election to the gaon panchayat in Khalapur and the two elections to the statutory village panchayat in the village studied by Gangrade) the dominant castes used their own wealth and ritual power to fight the elections. The reason why the alliance could not be revived in Khalapur's second election must be understood from the fact that the Rajputs were then divided and could not appeal as a caste to the Brahmins as a caste. This alliance was only effective when the dominant caste was faced with a challenge from below, and as has been seen in chapter II, this alliance is a very old one and designed to keep the Hindu society functioning. This could not be done when there was no threat from below. There was no need for a more traditional role-playing on the part of the two important castes. From this the conclusion can be drawn that there are two forms of status: one which is purely ritual and does not need the buttressing and one, which is an aspect of wealth and influence,

which does. The Brahmins are an example of the former, the Rajputs an example of the latter. The former ritual status exists, in a sense, as a thing in itself. It is always there, no matter what conditions the category of people it pertains to, live under. The latter is always an aspect of standing in society and goes together with the material variable, i.e., wealth and other criteria for power. Thus, it can never be divorced from the material variable but the two must be seen in constant interaction, always reinforcing each other. Therefore, in the clean caste hierarchy, with the exception of the Brahmins, ritual standing normally coincides with material wealth.

In the village that has been studied by Gangrade, the Jats also put up a united front when faced with low-caste opposition, but here the Brahmins do not seem to have played any important role at all. In fact, they are not even mentioned in connection with the alliance building that preceded the election. It is of course impossible to give any certain reason why the Brahmins were not involved. But one guess could be worth while. Perhaps it was due to the fact that the proximity to Delhi and the fact that so many villagers worked outside the village had changed the ideology of their's enough to make the Brahmins rather useless as a pressure upon people. On the other hand, caste was still very

important as can be seen from the fact that the untouchable Chamars had to put up a Baniya as their candidate to have any chance. This can not be pushed any further since the relevant data is lacking but it is tempting to suggest that caste restrictions are to a certain extent less important in this village near Delhi, while in Khalapur, which is mainly agricultural the traditional economy means that the ideology has been changing less rapidly.

N O T E S

- 1 This breaking up of the boycott shows that Leach's argument that the higher castes have to compete for the services of the scarce low-caste services on a family basis is not correct. When there is a conflict between castes (and in a close-knit community as this disputes between members of different castes often lead to disputes between the castes) then the greater resources, as always, determine the result.

- 2 This is a problem that to a certain extent pertains to psychology, but it is important to note. It can be seen from a social analysis that a certain category of people become the most important in the society. But from among these people some become more influential than others, although they have the same resources as the others. This fact becomes important when life histories are used in social anthropology, and with it is connected the problem of a representative survey of informants.

CHAPTER FOUR

In the first chapter a model for the processual analysis of political competition was outlined. The variables and concepts used in it are taken to have universal applicability. That is to say, the model is not tied to any specific ethnographic area or type of society. This claim is based primarily on the fact that the model relies mainly on social relations themselves. These social relations are seen as having two sides to them. There is the pure material side, office, which is the place in the social hierarchy and the material resources that the ordered social relations, the institution can activate. And there is the symbolic side of the social relations, or institutions, that which needs a common idea about the legitimacy of the institution, value. These two aspects are activated in social life when groups compete. One could say, then, that the model is a way of analyzing how different kinds of resources are activated and used through social relations in the widest sense. Clearly, no social anthropologist can along study all social relations in a society. He has to restrict himself by choosing from among them. He has to delimit a field: "A 'field' is composed of all those who are directly involved (and this needs to be

specified for each particular study) in the process under investigation during the time period being considered together with the resources the field members use in the process" .. "The 'arena' is composed of all those who are directly involved with the field participants in processes other than the one which is under investigation" (Swartz 1967:57). The investigation of the field means that the social relations taking place there have to be described and this is the same thing as saying that one has to establish the ethnographic background including the ideological - symbolic level. That is, a complete description of the relations between individuals and groups and the way these are defended symbolically and also manipulated through both material resources and ideology. To arrive at a satisfactory description of these two sides of the institutions, it is necessary to see them historically. (This can of course only be done with any higher degree of accuracy in literate societies). History is important in two ways: first, it establishes the way in which the society in question has been developing; one gets an idea of the long-term trends. Second, the processual method investigates relations between people over time, and these relations are themselves continuations of other social relations that existed before. Furthermore, these two aspects of history

also gives a description of the specific offices and values that have existed and changed over time. And as pointed out earlier these are the very aspects which social relations or institutions can be said to have.

To arrive at such a complete description of the society, or rather the processes, under investigation it is necessary to use the other elements of the model. These include the different forms of social relations that have shaped the society in question and which are still influential. They include the distinction between different levels in the administrative hierarchy as well as the different ideologies which help shaping the institutions. In the Indian setting there are several principles (organizing categories, i.e. institutions) that can be seen as being important in determining the form and content of the specific Hindu ideology and social relations. Hinduism in itself is, of course, an institution. It can be viewed from the outside as existing in competition or together with other institutions, or forms of social life. But when these "macro institutions" come into contact with each other, be it friendly or hostile relations, items from each of them will be incorporated into the other. On a different level, then, i.e., when the institution is viewed from the inside, new elements intrude and if they are not too

important or too strong, they will be subsumed under the old ideology and form a part of the social relations. These new items will be either values or offices. That is to say one of these aspects will probably be the one that determines people's attitude towards it. One example would be the egalitarian Muslims values that shaped attitudes among the Hindus with regard to untouchables. It is likely that such an ideological concept, if introduced, will also shape conduct to a certain degree. Examples of an office being brought under control by the old ideology are furnished by the two case studies where the ideological components of the statutory panchayats were not strong enough to prevent the institutions from being used by traditionally dominant groups who could assert their dominance over them partly through symbolic means. Since the actors at the local level act within the society and its ideology with or without the additional help or constraint of "foreign" values and offices, it is this level that to the anthropologist, becomes the important one. That is to say, the anthropologist takes an "inside view" of the "macro institution" in his detailed mapping of the social process. And here enters the concept of organization. That equals the institutions used at a particular moment by the actors. In

chapter II these possible institutions were outlined. It started from the assumption that they had developed through time and changed their content due to internal changes and influences from the outside. Despite the changes the Hindu values had remained a super-ideology and shown itself strong enough to assimilate the ideologies of the conquering peoples more or less. The Brahmins, as was seen in Chapter II, fighting with the Kshatriyas for supremacy allied themselves with the victorious intruders and legitimized their conquest. In this case it is likely that they were able to exert such a powerful influence over their victors due to the fact they were literate and had a formalized religion and view of society, as it were. The organization that developed in this case is of course the Brahmins furnishing their ideological resources while their material resources were negligible compared to those of the intruding peoples. And this organization is directed against the old martial caste, the Kshatriya. They, in turn, re-interpreted the world through Buddhism which would give them a symbolic means of defining their opposition to the Brahmins. But they are still within the Hindu super ideology as a caste. Their social organization and the offices remained the same. And they became again more assimilated to the super ideology.

To this contributed to a great extent the fact that the Kshatriyas became almost extinguished in the different waves of invasion that struck India. And new groups from the invaders entered society as Kshatriyas with the old caste name and responsibilities as well as embracing the official ideology as interpreted by the Brahmins. So there is a two-way process here, which is of course necessary if an alliance between two groups, in the form of an organisation, shall prove to be viable.

The Muslim invasions and later the British conquest meant that new elements intruded into the traditional ideology in a more deep-going manner. But the Muslims developed castes and with that one of the most important organizational principles in Hinduism. At the same time the Hindu ideology was influenced by Muslim concepts. The British reshaped to a great extent the offices and introduced new values that were meant to go with them. It seems, however, as if the offices were accepted but they were interpreted in old concepts. The new authority gave nevertheless the different groups a wider latitude in dealing with each other. One could now go outside the traditional system and appeal to the courts that were meant to operate in a European manner, but were actually used for traditional disputes. In this way, the organization that a group could build up

included the offices of the new authority (and only to a lesser extent the values, since they did not legitimize the offices to the people). This development has continued into the period after Independence

This has meant a struggle between traditional values and those of a more modern world-view. The tradition in itself is of course an expression of an ideology or the inheritance of institutions. Against these inherited institutions stand those which are introduced by a stronger group. Conflict will ensue until there is a general agreement about how the new office shall be defined in terms of values, whether it be in traditional forms or in forms in which it was intended to function by those who introduced it.

This brings the analysis from the macro-institutional level down to the local level. The macro level, in this case, is the result of competition between groups in the same way as the local level is. It also establishes the conceptual and ethnographic framework for the actors within the society. It is the entity that has to be taken as given at the beginning of the analysis.

The case studies in chapter III show the process at the local level. The following things can be noted:

The groups changed over time. Thus, in the first elections in both villages one can witness how the dominant caste stands united against the threat from below, and in the second elections in both villages the dominant caste is divided into several factions which fight each other with the low-castes as supporters. In this instance Bailey's definition of faction members can be used. He divides the faction into leader, follower (the members of which can change sides) and dependent (which is a member who cannot change sides). (Bailey 1968:283). The leaders were all from the dominant caste and so were the followers, while the dependent were recruited along the lines of the farmer-retainer system and other links.

As has been noted the only category of people that has, in a traditional Indian setting, real political autonomy, is the dominant caste. This is borne out by the case studies, where the dominant caste in each instance was able to defeat the opposition. The opposition, on the other hand, could not organize effectively to wrest political control from the dominant caste. And the reason they could not do that is to be found in the institutions that were at their disposal and which they had to use in the struggle.

And this was of course due to the organization of different

institutions, both as offices and values, that the dominant castes could muster.

The lower castes, on the other hand, who are dominated want to retain some traditional institutions while changing others with the help of institutions created in an other system with a different ideology. The traditional institutions do of course mainly work in the interest of the dominant caste, which controls them. Therefore, the castes that are immediately below the dominant caste or are numerically large enough to pose a threat, like the Chamars in the second case study will take advantage of a modern institution that is designed for a society of individuals and where the number of people counts. The dominant caste then will use all the traditional institutions at its disposal to counter this. If it is lucky the other castes are still so dependent on these institutions that they have to yield in the end, letting the dominant caste integrate the new institution into the society and use it as still another institution with which to wield power. But if new conditions have intruded enough to have weakened the hold of traditional institutions over the people, then the low-caste challenge is likely to be successful. The traditional institutions act as resources for the dominant

caste while they act mainly as constraints for the lower castes. This is true about all institutions from Hindu thought and caste to the distribution of harvest every year. The dominant caste can draw on all the traditional institutions to combat the low castes, while the low castes in the struggle for the new institutions can use only a few of the traditional institutions and their approach to these institutions is divided since they do not want to do away with all of them, but only change so much that they can get on top in the system. Therefore, they reject some traditional institutions while they want to use others. But unfortunately the dominant caste is in an even better position to use these institutions and organize them in a force that it is impossible for the lower castes to resist.

In the case study the level of integration has been mainly the local level and the analytical levels have been the different status groups at the local level. The institution of statutory panchayat served in a sense to trigger off the competition. It was the prize that the victorious group would win. And after having won it would take possession of it and turn it against its traditional enemies and use it in the struggle at the local level.

The wider levels of integration entered only occasionally in the form of formal rules for the carrying out of the competition, rules that were obeyed to the letter, but the spirit of the competition was different. Here traditional ideology and traditional wealth were used to stop the growing influence of modern India's ideas and modern means of political struggle.

Means that the lower castes would have needed if they should stand any chance of winning.

And in only one case did the different levels of integration coincide with the analytical levels. That was in the case of the MLA who was not re-elected.

As a conclusion it can safely be said that the political struggle in these villages was mainly carried out in traditional idioms and forms, with the leading status groups being able to effectively hamper the attempts that were made by the dominated groups to make use of the wider system. And these political processes were themselves brought about by the more inclusive system.

But, at least in the first case study it seems likely that the villagers, even the high castes when divided between themselves, will increasingly make use of the new means of political resources that is offered by the administrative set-up.

The key concepts in these political processes are, as has been repeatedly stressed, the material and the symbolic resources that a certain group can weld into an organization. And these resources show themselves in the social relations as offices and values, sometimes acting together sometimes discrepant. And as has been noted the variable of material resources is derived from the economic process and it can be discerned in the economic relations that the economic process gives rise to. And, lastly, it can be seen in the institutions of the society, which are elaborations of the specific economic relations. Thus, in the two case studies that have been analysed, it can be seen that the economic process was agriculture, although it was being diversified into a more "modern" economy in the village outside Delhi. The economic relations that rested on this basis were strictly hierarchical and were represented in the caste system. It was firmly rooted in hierarchy and the ownership of land mainly concentrated in the hands of one category of people, the dominant caste. This system was kept going by the institutions of caste and all the offices that were necessary for the system to be kept alive. In this thesis mention has been made of traditional panchayats as the most obvious means of settling disputes and quarrels in the interest of the traditional order. But the

institutions of Hindu thought and the rising liberal democracy have also their material aspect. They are at the command of certain groups and legitimize their power and the lack of power of other groups. This introduces the other aspect of institutions, that of symbolism and ideology. As was noted in the first chapter the things that a certain person knows, including his experiences in the widest possible sense, can be termed his Weltanschauung. This Weltanschauung is shared, to a great extent, with other people in the same society, which is the same as the ideology of that society, but some of it is outside this common property. This is the part that is absolutely ideosyncratic and this is the very basis for social change to be accepted by this individual. Parts of the Weltanschauung are shared with others through symbols forming ideologies. These symbols have a power of their own through being internalized. This was shown to be the case in attitudes towards the caste system and also towards the foundation of caste, Hindu thought. These things are accepted, at least in the rural parts of India, as axiomatic and take on an emotional character. Since this emotional character means that the values they are an expression of are not reflected upon they take on a very forceful appearance. It could be argued that the individual who is largely outside society as far as his Weltanschauung is

concerned, reacts differently to many of the symbols which the rest of the society regard with approval. Thus, the Indian who has been educated and may be against the caste system even at an emotional level, sees caste restrictions in a quite different light from his coresidents in the village who still believe in the virtuous observations of these restrictions. Unfortunately the case studies do not give any such example, but the Principal in Khalapur can probably be seen as a man who saw the general meeting panchayat as something else than the villagers did. This of course goes together with the general change that is being effected in India through the introduction of liberal democracy, but some people are clearly more susceptible than others. And in this way the former dominance of traditional Hinduism is being challenged by other systems and other values and this is represented in the case studies by the attempts by the lower castes to oppose the dominant castes. Their super-ideology was to a great extent the same as that of the dominant caste, but the fact that they were powerless politically made them have part of their Weltanschauung outside the area which constituted the ideology of the politically dominant caste. They were in subordinate positions and this was sufficient to make them potentially reluctant to embrace some of the Hindu tenets, such as their own

innate inferiority.

Role playing is of course necessarily connected with the institutions. Every institution has roles that go with it and are seen as appropriate when the institution is being used. In the case studies it can be seen how the dominant castes, when faced with opposition from the other castes, stressed the traditional roles and did so by using the traditional institutions that the roles were expressions of. Just as cleavages are vertical and horizontal in a society so the stressing of roles in a situation of political struggle takes on the same character. When the dominant castes were threatened with low-caste opposition they stressed the roles of the traditional institutions in a horizontal sense. When different groups of the dominant castes were fighting each other they stressed the vertical side of the roles by using the ties of patron-client relationships and approaching their inferiors on the basis of family and not stressing necessarily the relative status of the castes in the first instance.

The lower castes who banded together against the dominant castes in the first elections acted against the roles they were supposed to play. Due to the change in their Weltanschauung they were ready to play other roles, roles that belonged to a different ideology, that of the modern India. To do this they had to be

helped by the modern institutions and be strengthened in their attempts at changing the role playing in the village. The stressing of the traditional roles on the part of the dominant castes served just to cut the rebels off from the possibility to play the roles of the modern society. And this is of course the same as saying that the institutions whether modern or traditional are expressed in everyday life through the playing of roles, which is the behaviour of people that can be observed in the society. And the roles are likely to change in the same way as institutions do.

And roles and role playing are of course the visible side of social relations. One stresses the roles that are consistent with one's ideology. In this sense roles equal ritual as it was understood to mean in the first chapter. And ritual constantly re-inforces social relations, especially if they are unchanging. But also in a changing situation roles that people take on in response to new opportunities whether material or ideological become institutionalized through the constant acting out of them.

Ritual through role playing, then, is an important means of making other people yield to the symbolic aspect of a social relationship, i.e., it expresses values.

To re-capitulate what has been argued: Political process can be seen as the activation of material and symbolic resources through social relations, institutions. These institutions operate at different levels of integration, but are seen to cross these in the actual process as resources and are studied as analytical levels. The material and symbolic resources are seen as offices and values. These are aspects of institutions. Several institutions can in the political process go together through the manipulation of competing groups and form organizations, which is a qualitatively new entity.

When translated into empirical reality the different concepts of the model have to be filled with facts on the ground as they exist at the moment of investigation and also how they have changed over time, especially if the contemporary situation is characterized by change. Then it is likely that many items in the ideology have been tainted with foreign elements. This macro institution which is then outlined will in itself show the same features with respect to the analytical variables of the model as the contemporary intensively studied process will. The same "forces" will be seen to be at work. That is to say, groups of actors will activate resources through social relations and this will change these relations in one way or another. This

follows of course from the fact that the macro institution in itself is made up of actors in the same way as the actors constitute the units which the anthropologist studies on a much smaller scale. And these processes lead to the present situation and the ethnographic and conceptual elements make up the world, as it were, where the political process chosen for study unfolds itself. And it in itself is of course part of that world.

The arena of intensive study, i.e., where the actors compete for a prize consists of the institutions that the actors themselves draw into the competition and arrange as organizations.

The levels, both those of integrations and the analytical vary.

The actors join them together through their actions, which consist in activating material and symbolic resources, the latter through the use of symbols which are shared by the different groups.

The symbols have a compelling power just like purely physical sanctions have. But the sanctions of the symbols take place on a mental level.

In the case studies it was shown how actors at the local level competed using the traditional institutions and also the new ones. The traditionally dominant groups were able to win thanks to the fact that they change in the Weltanschauung and ideology

among the dominated groups (a prerequisite for competition to take place) were not accompanied by any material resources furnished by modern India. And they were able to muster symbolic resources to a degree that the lower groups could not, and the high-caste groups had also considerable material resources at their disposal. It is notable that the villagers outside Delhi seem to be less impressed with the traditional importance of the Brahmins than the more conservative low castes in Khalapur were. And this is probably due to the changed ecology in the former case. The people were more integrated into a modern economy with new values, but the process had not gone far enough for the dominated groups to be able to win.

The more inclusive levels of integration entered the field mostly as institutions that different groups at the local level competed for.

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